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ABSTRACT

This review is a comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness and efficiency of education in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) government high schools, addressing basic questions and making recommendations concerning goals, school structure, provision of resources, curriculum, and educational outcomes. It is divided into 13 chapters covering the following topics: (1) the beginnings (historical background); (2) school autonomy and the Authority; (3) parents, power, and schools in the ACT; (4) educational standards in times of change; (5) purpose and expectations in high schools in the ACT; (6) the high schools in action; (7) student assessment and reporting in high school; (8) students and the high schools; (9) teachers in the ACT high schools; (10) making decisions on high school curriculum; (11) implications for the system; (12) resources and financial responsibility; (13) conclusions. Three appendixes provide a bibliography, submissions received, and a description of the research methodology. The text includes 22 tables and 6 charts. (TE)

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the challenge of change

a review of high schools in the act

1. report

EA 016 397

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1 report of the review committee

act schools authority, canberra 1983

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Foreword

The Schools Authority's decision to commission a review of education in Canberra's government high schools was taken in the context of the ongoing appraisal of all aspects of the ACT public education enterprise. It was also taken in the knowledge that throughout the nation there is controversy about the appropriateness and quality of secondary education. The Review Committee's Terms of Reference were drafted so as to focus attention on fundamental questions of purpose and directions for future development while not avoiding immediate issues of curriculum, structures and resources.

This Report and its companion research pieces deal with educational and social issues in a way that is of value both locally and across Australia. They take us one more step along a never-ending path leading to even better education for the national capital's youth. The documents are a declaration of faith in the capability of the Canberra community and teaching service to rise to the difficulties inherent in such an obligation.

Much thinking and action has gone into this particular review over the past two years; much more is to follow as a result of the comprehensive arrangements that have been made for the dissemination and discussion of the Report. It is being published on the same day that it is formally received by the Authority - at its June 1983 meeting. The wisdom and commitment of the Committee members are clearly evidenced in that over the comparatively short time of nine months of part-time effort (over and above normal duties) they have come to such a perceptive and sensitive understanding of the workings and challenges of a system of schooling that is different in so many ways from most of their previous experiences.

To all the individuals and organizations who contributed to the review process - and especially to the Review Committee members, their consultant and secretary, and our own officers - the Authority expresses its sincere appreciation.

ACT SCHOOLS AUTHORITY

Terms of Reference

The overall goal of the review is to provide an assessment of the effectiveness and efficiency of education in ACT government high schools. In the light of the future environment within which education is likely to function, the review is to identify ways in which high schools need to further develop, and the implications of this for primary schools, secondary colleges and the system as a whole.

To achieve this goal, the review would need to pay particular attention to the following questions:

a) Questions concerning goals:

* Will the generally accepted goals of education for students in Years 7 to 10 be appropriate for the future, in the light of needs and circumstances likely to exist then?

* Are the processes for determining the goals of education for these students appropriate and effective?

* In what way will the needs and expectations of these students and other interested parties (parents, employers, etc.) be likely to change in the future? What role should high schools and others play in satisfying such future needs and expectations?

b) Questions concerning the structure of education:

* Is the current structure of four-year high schools spanning Years 7 to 10 appropriate for existing and likely future needs? Could needs within some areas of the ACT be better satisfied by a different structure? Is it necessary to have the one structure throughout all areas in the ACT?

* Does the existing structure facilitate transition of students into high schools and from high schools to other education and to employment?

c) Questions concerning provision of resources:

* Are adequate resources devoted to the education of students in Years 7 to 10?

* Does the high school sector have an equitable share of resources that are available?

* Are the resources available sufficient to sustain a system that emphasises school-based decision-making?

* Are the resources that are available used in the most effective way? Should changes in structure or methods of operation be made so that resources available can be used with greater effectiveness?

* Are adequate support services provided to high schools by by the Schools Office?

* In what ways will needs for resources in the future be likely to be different from current needs?

d) Questions concerning curriculum:

* Are curricula (including methods of instruction, pastoral care, assessment and certification) appropriate and effective in view of the present and likely future needs of students?

* Is the diversity of curricula available within individual high schools and across the system adequate to meet existing and likely future needs of students?

* Is sufficient provision made for individual students, in terms of their particular intellectual and social development and their goals?

* Are any particular types of students disadvantaged in terms of educational provisions available to them?

* Could curricula and procedures be further improved to lead to a better transition of students moving into high schools and from high schools to other education, employment and to possible periods of unemployment?

* Is there a need to improve existing practices relating to co-ordination and liaison between high schools and primary schools, secondary colleges, TAFE institutions and employers?

e) Questions concerning the outcomes of high school education:

* Are the legitimate needs and expectations of students and other interested parties being met?

* Are the means by which high schools are accountable for their operations appropriate and effective?

* By what means is the performance of high schools (both as individual schools and as a total sector) evaluated? Are such methods appropriate and effective?

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Preface

The task of reviewing a sector of a system of education is a daunting one because it calls upon a group of people of disparate backgrounds and interests to examine a system with which they are unfamiliar. They must endeavour to understand what the system hopes to achieve, and why it functions as it does. They must then assess whether it is in fact meeting its own expressed aims and comment upon its successes and failures.

In approaching the task the Committee was faced with the choice of dealing with the terms of reference seriatim or approaching them through these sources. It adopted the latter course of action because this provided the flexibility it sought to explain its findings.

This means listening to many people, reading a great deal of written material, sifting out rhetoric from fact, and seeking out and examining hard data.

We thank all those who took the trouble to assist the Committee; those people and groups who prepared submissions, the many people who gave of their time in meeting the Committee, the principals, teachers parents and students who spoke with us, officers of the ACT Schools Authority, and especially the Chief Education Officer and the Chairman who have been both helpful and supportive throughout.

The Committee thanks the indefatigable Mr Lyell Harris for his enthusiasm, tireless efforts and patience in his capacity as executive member of the Committee. We were very fortunate in having the services of Mr J C Cusack, Acting-Director of Research and Planning in the South Australian Education Department, as consultant to the Committee. His background and skill in research and resource matters were invaluable.

We also acknowledge the splendid secretarial support given to us by Mrs Maryanne Gore including making sure that we were where we were supposed to be roughly on time, that we were fed and transported hither and thither. In addition Maryanne was a valuable researcher and conscience.

Frustration comes, as deadlines approach and the Committee realises that there remain questions to be asked and answered. There is no alternative, however, to simply accepting the fact that data will always be incomplete and that the impressions must be set down. Nor is there any way out of the nagging knowledge that for every generalisation there is an exception, for every failure noted there is a success.

We present this Review of High Schools in the ACT to the ACT Schools Authority aware of its shortcomings, thankful to those who have helped and hopeful that it may make some small contribution to education in the ACT.

J. R. Steinle
Chairman

L. J. Harris
Executive Member

Joan Brown
Member

L. B. O'Brien
Member

Recent History

This is the third in a series of sectional reviews of public schools in the ACT which has been commissioned by the ACT Schools Authority undertaken since the system was established in 1973. The first two, the Anderson Report on Colleges (1980) and the Cullen Report on Primary Schools (1981) recorded general satisfaction with the operation of the first and final years of schooling, and with the structure of the 7-4-2 system. This report of the ACT High School Review Committee on the middle years adds its support for the public acceptance of the structure of the system. It does however, raise questions which, while they are not unique to ACT high schools, are peculiarly flavoured by the way in which the system has developed. The antecedents of the ACT system in the NSW system, and the principles of devolution and participation adopted when the ACT schools separated, provide the contexts in which these problems should be addressed.

Various studies, including research by Husen (1979) for the CECD and Collins and Hughes (1982) for the ACER provide evidence of a crisis in purpose in high schools throughout Australia and in similar Western style democracies. The term crisis is used in its precise sense as turning point or moment of decision rather than in its common usage as time of disaster. This crisis has come about not by any particular fault of schools but by an accumulation of conflicting public expectations of schools in a time of rapid technological, social and political change. The Review Committee, on the basis of experience of state systems as well as an evaluation of the literature on high school education, agrees with this view. The Committee believes that this crisis in high schools is putting the new ACT system under its first real test. Its distinctive features in ACT high schools, and the manner in which individual schools and the system authorities are trying to respond, are the substance of this report.

New South Wales Origins

When Canberra was established as the national seat of government the Commonwealth and New South Wales Governments agreed that the New South Wales Education Department should administer the appointment and control of teachers in Canberra, the inspection of schools, the maintenance of existing school buildings and the direction of instruction according to the New South Wales Public Instruction Act of 1880, its amendments and regulations. The Commonwealth Government was to be responsible for the erection, repairs and maintenance of school buildings.

Since schools of the ACT developed along the same lines as NSW public schools, the reorganization following the Report of the Committee on Secondary Education of 1957 (the Wyndham Committee), led to the establishment in Canberra, along with NSW of public secondary schools that were comprehensive, non-

selective and co-educational. The curriculum consisted of a common introductory course in Year 7, and a core of subjects plus limited election in Years 8-10. Years 11 and 12 were seen as tertiary preparation years. External examinations were held at the end of Year 10 and Year 12 for the School Certificate and Higher School Certificate respectively. At the time this was regarded as a radical and progressive move. Nevertheless, as one commentator observes, during the 50's and 60's:
".... the NSW system seemed the archetype of Australian patterns of education administration - large, highly centralized, impersonal, rigid in its administration by formula and precedent; secretive in its fear of challenge and criticism." (Blakers 1978). The system allowed little scope for local initiatives in curriculum or local control in school organization.

At the time of the introduction of the Wyndham scheme in its schools, there was an explosion of population in Canberra. In 1960 the population was 52,000 and by 1967 this had nearly doubled to 103,000. Comprised mainly of public servants, service personnel and academics, this population was highly mobile, had experience of education elsewhere in Australia and overseas, was above the Australian average in education and affluence, and articulated very high expectations for its children and schools. The retention rate in high schools was, and still is, much higher than in the rest of Australia. These factors coincided with considerable teacher shortage. "The results could only be described as chaotic with unqualified, unprepared and frequently changing teachers trying to teach complicated syllabuses from textbooks which, in mathematics and science at any rate, were still being written." (ibid)

Moves Towards A Separate ACT System

This state of affairs, and the accompanying problems of staffing in both primary and secondary sectors, triggered moves towards a separate education system for the ACT. Papers by Burnett and Blakers (in Hughes and Mulford 1978) give an excellent account both of the events and the feelings of the time. Concerns included the highly centralized NSW system which did not allow sufficient flexibility to cope with the special circumstances in the ACT; teacher shortages; greater independence for schools; perceived desire for greater participation by the community and teachers; and more options within the curriculum.

As a part of the campaign a public seminar was held at which a Working Party was set up under the chairmanship of Sir George Currie. This Working Party reported late in 1967 recommending an independent education authority for the ACT. "The government system of education, then, is visualized as one of high quality, based on free schools which are largely independent and responsible; one which offers freedom of choice to parents in which their participation is a vital element; one where the controlling Authority itself is flexible, adaptable and sympathetic." (Currie 1967)

During the discussion following this report, and the 1970 decision to set up the Commonwealth Teaching Service in order to staff the Northern Territory schools, there was a proposal from the Commonwealth Department of Education and Science for a system of junior high schools and senior colleges. These were widely discussed, both in the community and within the Department of Education and Science, and in November 1971 the Minister set up a Working Committee under the chairmanship of Dr R.J. Campbell, to examine the proposal for the establishment of secondary colleges in the ACT. On 20 December 1972 the Committee delivered its report which was published under the title Secondary Education for Canberra. (The Campbell Report)

The Campbell Report

The Campbell Report advocated fundamental changes in the structure of secondary education. It pointed to: earlier maturation of student and assumption of adult roles; the increasing complexity of the content of schooling in the earlier years of secondary school; the expressed desire of students for a greater say in education, including discipline; higher retention with consequent alienation of some students being treated far longer as children and subjected to an academic curriculum aimed at the higher ability groups in senior years; problems in dealing with a-social or anti-social students; and a number of changes in values among the population generally and among the young in particular, of the kind happening throughout Australia but accentuated in Canberra with its atypical population. Campbell noted that post primary schools were being expected to undertake additional roles for which teachers were not trained, and to encourage conformity at a time when society was becoming more permissive.

The report developed a set of educational needs which it concluded would best be fulfilled by means of a different structure of secondary education. These included: the need for students to be adaptable to changing technology and work; for more emphasis to be placed on intrinsic motivation in the development of personal responsibility; for people to learn how to learn; for strong links between school, home and community; for educational institutions to become a community resource for lifelong learning; and for schools to adjust their curriculum to be more suitable for all students not just for those destined for tertiary institutions.

Various structures were examined including a K-5, 6-9, 10-12 "middle school" structure which the Committee found attractive but rejected because of building costs and the disruption that would be caused to both primary and secondary sectors. The final recommendation was for a K-6, 7-10, 11-12 structure with the remark that "at a later date it may be possible with less disturbance to adapt the system further to incorporate more of the middle school features". (Campbell 1973)

High School Curriculum

The Report saw great scope for junior high schools to be able to develop curricula which were not simply a prerequisite for college entry and which could "... broaden the range of studies and introduce a flexibility and diversity ... linked to the life and work of the general community. The curriculum at this level must provide for all students, stimulus to develop in three broad overlapping educational dimensions: the development and refinement of cognitive skills, the maturing of socialization, and the acquisition of competence in creative, productive and recreational pursuits." (ibid). To extend each student to his maximum in each of these dimensions, curriculum would contain a "problem centred core" not "subject centred" but "... closely related to the students' own experience: health, the environment, the life and work of the community, personal relationships and the like are areas in which the core problems are likely to originate." (ibid). It was possible, the Report conceded, that some curriculum planners would want to implement a "problem centred" approach as an "interdisciplinary" approach in which the basic skills and concepts of core subjects like English, Mathematics, Science and Social Sciences might be brought to bear on problems. In a further concession in accord with an earlier recommendation that each school should be "autonomous" in curriculum, "... we recognize that groups of teachers in some schools may wish to structure their school's curriculum in ways different from those which we are recommending." (ibid). Little detail was developed on the wide range of optional or peripheral courses to be associated with the core: they were to include music and the arts, crafts, physical well-being and comparative studies of religion. These activities were to encourage creativity, be offered from the beginning of Year 7, and be flexible in terms of time occupied. It was also recommended that there should be no external examination at the end of Year 10. No recommendation was made as to whether a certificate should be issued at that stage, but there was a recommendation for a standard transcript to be made available to all whenever they left a school. The discussion led to recommendation 7: "We recommend that the high school curriculum be complete in itself, and be built around a problem-centred core that emphasizes the interaction of student, school and society. The basic skills should be essential elements of this core, and a wide range of options should be offered peripheral to the core studies."

The Campbell Report gave more attention to the innovative idea of colleges than it did to the Years 7-10 high schools. In an address to secondary principals in Goulburn in 1982, Campbell pointed to the inadequate treatment of high school curriculum. It was recognized at the time of writing the Report in 1973 that it was "... perhaps in the high school that the greatest need for radical change lies." (Campbell 1982). Whilst the Report spelled out a carefully considered set of objectives for colleges, "... it did not spell out a similar set of objectives for high schools as institutions." (ibid).

The proposal that high school curricula be "problem-centred" rather than "subject-centred" was made as part of a strategy to ensure that the best staff would not be immediately creamed off to teach in senior colleges. "The importance of that shift in the conception of curriculum can be highlighted by the following consideration. Where teachers take what they are doing to be simply a matter of teaching a subject, there is a natural and almost inevitable desire to teach that subject at the level where it can be displayed in fullest flower. That level is at the top end of the secondary process." (ibid). Whether the strategy worked is,for Campbell an open question: what is clear is that despite the pointers to a need for a major rethink of high school curricula " ... there was a failure of imagination in relation to the high schools by and large... It was easy to think of the colleges as new institutions requiring new planning, new concepts, new style. Too many of the high schools, I submit, continued as 6 year Wyndham high schools that had been decapitated." (ibid).

We endorse this honest re-appraisal which we believe highlights a problem which is at the heart of the matters discussed in this report.

Creating The ACT Schools Authority As A "Participative" System

Shortly after the delivery of the Campbell Report the Government announced that an independent statutory authority would be established to control government schools in the ACT as from January 1974. In March, 1973 the Minister formed a committee to make recommendations about "... the most suitable form of education authority for the ACT....".

The Committee's report (Hughes 1973) went carefully and thoroughly into the philosophical and practical issues of system and school governance, resulting in 32 recommendations to provide a blueprint for a "participative system" which would develop a partnership between parents and the teaching service in schools and in the administration of the system. The recommendations became the basis for an interim ACT schools authority which commenced under the chairmanship of Hughes in 1974, and for the ACT Schools Authority Ordinance which formalized the system in 1976.

Not all of the recommendations of the Hughes Committee found their way into the Ordinance. As with the retrospective comments of Campbell on high school curricula, so it is possible with the benefit of hindsight to detect significant inconsistencies in the establishment of the ACT Schools Authority. Inevitably, these have affected the directions which the participatory system in ACT has taken. That these issues are reflected in a number of submissions to this Review of High Schools suggests that they continue to be responsible for strains and tensions in the participative system in which high schools are operating.

It is noted, for instance, that the Authority, under the Ordinance, has six ministerial nominees (two recommended by the Hughes Committee), three Teachers' Federation nominees (two recommended), two House of Assembly nominees (one recommended). These changes, particularly the increased number of ministerial nominees, have been criticized as seriously disturbing the balance of representation in a participative Authority, and raising questions about perceived ownership of the system and in particular, on the relationships between schools and the Authority?

Other significant differences between plans and practice were to do with the role and operation of school boards. Hughes recommended school board responsibility for the employment of staff. This recommendation was not adopted in the Ordinance. Some submissions have suggested that without this involvement boards cannot be truly responsible for the schools' programs. The term of office of school boards was recommended as two years but only one year is laid down in the Ordinance. A number of submissions have suggested that one year does not allow members to become thoroughly familiar with the complex matters and relationships involved in school governance, and that two or even more years would lead to much greater efficiency of operation and more productive contributions by members. We must ask whether these arrangements are sufficient to realize the participation which was obviously central to the original conception of an ACT schools authority.

A final example is the arrangement recommended by Hughes for a Schools Authority to include TAFE institutions in their control. In fact a separate TAFE administration was set up within the Commonwealth Department of Education. It has been suggested to us that such a division of responsibility, particularly within a small community such as Canberra, is inimical to the development of coherent educational policy and programs. A later comment will be made in this report about the serious lack of knowledge among high school students and teachers of the alternatives that TAFE has to offer beyond Year 10. The Review Committee accepts that there is always likely to be some difference between recommendations made in a report and the reality of implementing decisions taken in the political context. The decision on TAFE was obviously one of these.

For the purpose of analysis, the Committee of Review has regarded the ACT Schools Authority as a system of schools moving with strong public support along a path towards devolution and participation but feeling its way from declared principles to politically determined practices. Understandably, from time to time, it experiences confusion in principle and inconsistency between principles and practice. These create the strains and tensions in the system that are part of the context in which high schools operate. The resolution of these strains and tensions on some occasions may require clarification of principle, and on others decisions to change practice to make it more consistent with principle.

The Interim Authority's "Guiding Principles And Aims of The ACT Schools Authority"

To the two background documents which are fundamental to this Review - the Campbell and the Hughes Reports - must be added the Interim Authority's 1973 statement on principles and aims. This is the educational specification for the system. The statement espouses values that have become familiar in Australia in the 1970's. Education of quality is the right of every child, and should "... develop individual abilites, and talents within the evolving social context." It should provide a wide variety of learning experiences "... for the gifted, for the slow, retarded or handicapped, for the eccentric and for the non-conformist." Not only effective communication and critical conceptual thinking, but aesthetic, creative, technical, manipulative, practical and recreational skills are important. The outcomes should include "... opportunity and guidance to seek, form and refine for himself .. a system of values through which he may come to a fuller understanding of himself, of others and of the nature of living, and in accordance with which he may make his choices as an individual." Schools are to be comprehensive, non-selective and not to charge fees ... beyond normal sums such a those at present levied for materials and services."

Structural arrangements to make such schooling possible must include sufficient independence. Thus: "consistent with these aims and with the general responsibility of the Authority for high standards, good order and coherence in the system as a whole, each school will be expected to determine its own educational philosophy, emphasis and programs based on the individual needs of its own students." In keeping with the principles of variety and autonomy in schooling, "... within practicable limits, students should be able to choose the school and the type of education best suited to their needs. Each school will, therefore, have the responsibility of catering first for the children in its own area, but will then be free to accept as many other pupils who wish to come to the school as may reasonably be placed. It is of the utmost importance that variety in education and the freedom of schools to devise their own education policies should not lead to the abandonment of equality of opportunity or be interpreted in educational attitudes inconsistent with the welfare of the child and the general aims and principles of the education system." The Authority is to be flexible, open and approachable in assisting schools to obtain resources required for their programs and "... will at the same time ensure coherence and avoid fragmentation within the system by encouraging continuing liaison between schools and between the various levels of education." The Authority is enjoined to periodically review the operation of the system, but it is reminded that: "... in the final analysis it must be recognized that both quality and effectiveness in a system of this kind depends upon the continuing interest and collaboration of teachers, parents, the students themselves and the community as a whole."

The Responses In The High Schools

This Review does not attempt a complete analysis of the extent of the realization of the aspirations of the three seminal documents, the Campbell, the Hughes Reports and the Guidelines, upon which the system has been established. We can only note discrepancies between the Hughes recommendations and the Ordinance in relation to high schools. Further judgement can be made on the basis of the reviews of primary schools and colleges. A paper which makes a number of observations on participation has been written for this review by Blakers. It will be referred to later. It is printed in a companion volume to this report.

With the publication of this report on high schools the time may well be right for the ACT system to review itself as a total system in order to assess the effectiveness of its decision making and implementation machinery in addressing the difficulties which are raised in this Review.

Summary

The ACT Schools Authority took charge of schooling in the national capital from the beginning of 1974, building on the New South Wales system. The first secondary colleges opened in 1976, taking over Years 11 and 12 from the high schools. The main features which the seminal documents intended for the new system, apart from the secondary colleges with their ability to develop broad curricula and to treat senior students in a more adult way, were maximum participation in school and system governance by parents, teachers and students; variety and choice among schools; school based curriculum decision making, and the development of a new approach to high school curriculum. The structure of four-year junior high schools followed by two years of college has met with general support among the Canberra community, and the colleges are recognized as successful. Participation in governance, particularly by parents and students at large, has not been fully realized nor have the hopes for variety and a new approach to high school curriculum. The high schools in Canberra, like those throughout most of the Western world are caught up in an unresolved tangle of conflicting expectations largely generated by rapid social, technological and political change.

In Chapter Two we look in more detail at the general problems of school autonomy and system articulation.

CHAPTER 2 SCHOOL AUTONOMY AND THE AUTHORITY

The first years of the new system must have been an exciting time. It seems that most schools willingly and vigorously took up the challenge to formulate their own philosophies and programs. Through staff curriculum committees, whole staff meetings, Parents and Citizens Associations (P&C's), school planning conferences and school boards there was a thorough examination of aims and objectives and of curriculum.

At secondary school level, however, there was a difference in approach between the colleges and the high schools. The colleges had certain planning advantages. They were seen to be the innovators in the system, and they had to start from scratch. Because of the need to develop courses for students which would be acceptable for tertiary entrance, and because they had a planning period before they commenced operations, they developed collaboratively, with the Accrediting Agency providing a liaison facility as well as its official function of accrediting courses and monitoring standards. The high schools, on the other hand, were taken over from New South Wales as fully operational schools, so that program development had to be carried out while teaching was in progress, while new administrative procedures were being developed, and without the advantage of any integrating body such as the Accrediting Agency. As Campbell has noted recently, in the excitement of implementing the proposals for setting up the new secondary colleges, little attention was paid to curriculum development in high schools by the system. True, in-service courses were conducted in the principles of curriculum design and allied studies, but there was no formal mechanism for ensuring coherence and co-operation between schools. There was informal co-operation through personal contact between principals and teachers, through subject associations and through the Secondary Principals' Council. It is safe to say, however, that insofar as high schools developed their own curriculum they did so very largely in isolation from each other, and that they have not moved far from being decapitated Wyndham high schools.

There has been some response to the Campbell Committee's recommendations on a core-elective curriculum. ("The basic skills should be essential elements of this core, and a wide range of options should be offered peripheral to the core studies.") Although there has been general freeing up of the elective system, with students being given wider choice and in some schools more frequent opportunities to change subjects, the Campbell Committee's hope that schools would base their offering on some alternative problem-centred interdisciplinary core has not been realized. In fact, in some high schools the need for a compulsory core was contested with some schools listing even traditional core subjects such as English and

Mathematics among the electives. Most radical departures were generally short-lived and the general pattern in schools is now a compulsory core of English, Mathematics, Science, Physical Education plus a Social Science in some cases with a variety of elective offerings.

Whether or not the alternative problem-centred curriculum was the best approach to adopt, high schools seem to have reached some kind of impasse. The crisis of purpose in high schools as noted by Collins and Hughes and affirmed by this Review Committee, is largely the result of rapid and far-reaching social, economic and technological change placing increasing demands on schools which they are failing to meet. In our view the curriculum content, methodology and structure of ACT high schools is not responsive and adaptable enough to meet these changes. Nor is the Authority geared adequately to come to grips with the problem or to assist the high schools to do so. Both the Authority and the schools are having difficulties in working together on curriculum. For this reason, the Review Committee deems it necessary to set out its thoughts on the problems of the high schools and the support offered by the system. We have concluded that due to the lack of any clear statement about the responsibility of the schools to the Schools Authority, and a popular assumption that schools are autonomous there has been inevitable confusion over the question of accountability. Indeed there is clear evidence of the need for this matter of school autonomy to be clarified.

Some high school principals have spoken to us about the autonomy of their school as if it meant that schools can do whatever they decide regardless of other schools and the community they serve. This attitude shows up in its most pernicious form in open competition between high schools for students, justified by one Authority officer as "the operation of market forces", and as being "a necessary condition for parents to exercise choice in the system". Within some high schools, the notion of autonomy is used to justify the exercise of power by subject department heads in running their departments. Our later detailed analysis will describe this as a force for rigidity and conservatism. In one high school it was described as a "non-interventionist approach". What this can mean was illustrated when a head of a subject department did not attend a two day conference on school policy and total curriculum because he believed that his subject would be not affected in any way, and was supported on the grounds that he was exercising his "professional autonomy". The same grounds have been used by subject department heads to justify claims made to us that individual teachers have the professional right to teach their subject without any direction or intervention by their departmental head.

In his informal address to secondary principals in 1982 Campbell attacked the notion of autonomy as it applies to curriculum development.

"On one point let's be quite clear: there is a lot of nonsense being talked about school autonomy in curriculum. It was never a recommendation of the Committee of 1972 that schools should have autonomy in matters of curriculum. Indeed the word "autonomy" seems to me quite inappropriate for people to use about our system. It is about time it was banished from the vocabulary. What we are talking about was a serious move to set up a decision-making body (later called a school board) at the school level, very close to the interface where the educational transaction occurs. There, close to the coal face, is where the detailed working out of how the curriculum is to proceed needs to occur. We saw that that would not be possible so long as some abstract and remote body was responsible for prescribing detailed syllabuses. We also saw that, in order to free up the curriculum, there was a need to abolish external examinations, which were not very efficient anyway.

What we proposed - and it was a major recommendation which was not enacted - was that there should be a Curriculum Advisory Board, at a senior level and highly expert, which would assist schools to select, adapt and evaluate appropriate curricula for their discerned needs. That was the kind of model we proposed. Probably because of lack of staff and the need to do a lot of things in a hurry, the only element of formal structure of that kind which in fact emerged was the Accrediting Agency, which offers a certain amount of informal assistance through panels to secondary colleges in developing the content of their own curricula.

What seems to me utterly crazy is that we should find ourselves with a situation where Band 1 teachers - maybe with some guidance - are trying to write curriculum de novo. Let us think seriously about what is involved in developing curriculum. One set of issues which needs to be clearly addressed are matters of learning theory. How is it people learn? At what stage do people learn what?... When addressing curricula we need to know about learning theory. To expect our average teachers to have mastered the complexities involved in this set of issues is to attribute to the Dip. Ed. an effectiveness that even its most ardent supporters could not think it has." (Campbell 1982)

Whether this is what teachers have been trying to do is debatable. The charge that school based decision making in curriculum means teachers developing curriculum de novo has been made into a straw man in debate on Australian schooling in recent years. There is plenty of evidence to indicate the derivative nature of present curriculum in high schools of the ACT from the Wyndham scheme, with some modifications imported by teachers who came into ACT high schools from other States. In our experience teachers generally draw their models from a variety of sources

close at hand and build on these. Instances of curriculum design de novo are rare. We do not criticize this. What we do see as a matter for concern, however, in ACT high schools is the rigidification of curriculum, and the lack of communication and collaboration between teachers, together with a lack of openness on the part of teachers to influence from appropriate bodies such as those representing parents. This insularity can be rationalized by appeal to professional autonomy but we suggest that autonomy can be too narrowly conceived. All teaching is within a series of contexts. Each teacher is a part of a staff and is not acting individually but collectively for the benefit of individual students. The essence of teaching is collaborative rather than autonomous action. As will be developed later in this report, we believe that curriculum in ACT high schools is structured too tightly on compartmentalized subjects and subject departments and that teachers rely too heavily on a transmission model of teaching in which the individual teacher operates in a closed circuit with a group of students in a classroom.

We are dealing here in broad generalities, and we know that there are examples of collaborative team teaching and collective decision making in curriculum in ACT high schools. We wish to address the prevailing emphasis on an approach to curriculum which is locked in partly by a pervasive misuse of the notion of autonomy. We do not wish to be seen as diminishing the role of teachers in curriculum development: we seek rather to redefine it. We do not accept the possible inference in Campbell's argument for instance, that teachers are ill-prepared for anything but detailing and implementing curriculum decisions made elsewhere and by others. In a later chapter we shall suggest a model of collaborative curriculum development based on different assumptions. One of our main challenges as a Review Committee is to make some suggestions as to how school communities might become a more effective decision making unit in developing their curriculum. The role of teachers in the process is to be highlighted. In the meantime, we turn to the second of our concerns about the system.

When Is A School System A System?

During the course of this Review, we have heard a great deal about a lack of articulation in ACT schools. It is suggested that the various parts of the system do not fit together well. We detect a serious concern from the submissions of individuals, teachers and principals, school boards and parent and teacher associations. Furthermore, the matter has been a recurring theme in discussion with members and officers of the Authority. Campbell's concern on curriculum has already been noted. As this report is being written a discussion paper has been issued by the Authority on curriculum policy which is an attempt to spell out guidelines for curriculum development to suggest relative roles of Authority and school boards, and to canvass some thoughts on system monitoring of curriculum. The paper has been

described in some initial reactions by some principals as being "aimed" at high schools and as an attempt to "tighten the reins" in high school curriculum. Other initial reactions have described it as a move towards recentralization and a threat to school autonomy. Not all responses from schools to the green paper have come in, and we are therefore restricted to noting the sensitivity and complexity of reaching consensus on what constitutes curriculum guidelines in a devolved system, on what systemic controls are agreed as necessary and acceptable and how such understandings and arrangements are to be arrived at. In many ways this green paper can be seen as a test case in articulation.

Another test case is the assessment of the viability of small schools. Some claim that the system Authority has the responsibility to determine the facts on population decline, examine various sources of advice on size and effectiveness, set up local studies of the implications of closure or amalgamations, represent the wider public interest, and ultimately to make hard decisions on the grounds of equity and quality. Counter claims suggest that this would amount to the Authority imposing solutions.

A number of other items could be cited. Submissions from high school boards have been very critical of the lack of Authority support and responsibility over the vexed question of school fees or levies. As will be seen in a later chapter, the evidence of diminished self-management monies from government is incontrovertible: boards are bitter about the way in which they are being expected to use funds raised through parent effort for expenditure on such things as normal plant maintenance, or to bear alone the public opprobrium in collecting fees or levies. It is being perceived by some as the Government avoiding responsibility for providing essential resources with the Authority taking an unrealistic although ideologically sound position on the voluntary nature of these contributions.

It is interesting and perhaps significant to note the ways in which the system is described by participant Thus senior officers have described the system as "laiss[illegible]-faire", "non-coercive", "non-interventionist", "non-centralist", "acting under the operation of market forces", "consisting of schools like lily pads floating in a pool", "a federal system", "moving towards federation", and that "while the machinery for a devolved-participative system is in place it is not working." The question therefore needs to be asked, "Does the ACT Schools Authority wish to be a system or simply an aggregation of schools?"

The ACT is not alone in addressing such questions. Most Australian States are at some stage in a process of devolution, and all are addressing problems of articulation. As part of this Review, we sought an opportunity to consider these issues in a think-tank with a small group of some of Australia's educational leaders. The Review Committee spent a weekend in discussion with Professor Phillip Hughes, Dr Ken McKinnon, Chairman of Victoria's State Board of Education, Dr Robert Vickery, Director-General in Western Australia, and the Chief Education Officer and Chairman of the ACT Schools Authority. The outcomes for the questions at issue may be summarized as follows.

The ACT system is a genuine lighthouse system. At the time of its inception it was ahead of other states in promulgating principles of devolution and participation. Its small size gave it potential advantages for implementing change. It was seen to be a useful model for other states. It is a devolved system albeit only partially as the original model has not been adopted in its entirety. Some of its beginnings may be seen as an over-reaction to the constraints of the NSW system and as a result a laissez-faire interpretation of autonomy may have been one consequence. Peripheral powers in the ACT should be strengthened and the system should continue to strive for devolution and local participation in all aspects. The question then becomes: how far can this process go and yet maintain coherence?

The legal framework for the ACT system is clear and unequivocal. Key provisions on the relative roles of Authority and school boards give the Authority substantial powers to delegate together with a defined responsibility to ensure coherence and order in the system. Boards on the other hand, have the responsibility of formulating policy for their schools, including curriculum. There is reserve power for the Authority to intervene in the affairs of a school. How can a balance be struck between the powers of the Authority and the boards? The answer to this question depends on what assumptions are held about power, authority, responsibility and change.

There was general agreement among the group that the answer is not to be found in major changes in the legal framework. What is needed now is an agreed process to further clarify relative roles and responsibilities. It was suggested that the Authority should take the lead in re-negotiating the extent and detail of devolution and participation, in such a way as to encourage greater understanding among the wider community. It should aim at achieving consensus and commitment to what the system, (as well as) its schools, is aiming to do. The Authority could well

commence with a clarification of its own perceived role in resource allocation, teaching service conditions, protection of students' rights, and promoting consistency in curriculum through general guideline statements. There could be a discussion on community values, and issues agreed to be important, such as sexism and multiculturalism. As one think-tank participant described it, such statements are "touchstones for addressing major issues and canvassing key ideas".

Summary

Because of the circumstances in which the system was established there was very little system support for curriculum development in high schools, but there was a strong notion of school autonomy. As a result schools developed their curricula largely in isolation from each other, but in fact they have not moved very far from the New South Wales Wyndham model. If the curriculum is to develop further, there is need for greater collaboration both among and within schools and with parent groups. There is need, too, for redefinition of the roles of subject departments and of individual teachers in the curriculum process.

There is need also for clarification of roles within the system as a whole. Misconceptions, based upon ideas of school autonomy and educational "market forces" have led to a lack of articulation in the system while, at the same time, devolution has not been fully carried out. What is needed is an agreed increase of devolution of responsibility to school boards together with a due recognition of the Authority's responsibility to ensure coherence and order in the system.

We recommend that the Schools Authority should take the lead in re-negotiating the extent and detail of devolution and participation in such a way that it encourages greater understanding among the wider community, and seeks consensus and commitment to the aims of the system and schools.

We go on, in the next chapter, to consider the necessity for, and the difficulty of ensuring increased parental involvement in schools.

We have referred to our impression that high schools in the ACT have responded slowly and awkwardly to change. This question of how schools and school systems in general should respond to change was taken up by the think tank. Not surprisingly, there were differing views about how this is done at present, and how it should be done.

One participant suggested that change happened through action-research in local settings: the focus had to be the individual school community. A contrary view suggested that change happens when leaders work through problems, find answers, and then diffuse them. The key is having expert knowledge and mechanisms at the centre of a system: the process is one of diffusion to the periphery. A third and middle position, and one which seems most appropriate for the ACT, is that change is negotiated throughout a total system involving local and system negotiations. Certainly this is important for example in curriculum development. The role of the Authority in curriculum is not restricted to issuing guideline statements. Major change in school curriculum may require the development of a critical mass of action. If there is sufficient agreement amongst high schools for instance, that there is a need for curriculum materials to be developed, this may best be done by collaborative action of key practitioners drawn from the schools and supported by the Authority. This would be much more effective and sensible than each individual school attempting to develop its own materials. Such an arrangement need not affect the choice of schools in using materials, as the result is not centrally imposed curriculum.

Participation in School Decision Making

This raises the question of how such negotiations are conducted, how decisions are made at the school level and the part to be played by the various interested parties, students, teachers, parents and the Schools Authority.

A submission to this Review describes the ACT system as a "devolved-representative" rather than a "devolved-participative" one. It suggested that the structures of participation on the Boards and the Authority are in place, but that they are representative of only a restricted number of interested parties, particularly parents, in decision making. Several other submissions expressed dissatisfaction with existing representation, including questions about the balance of membership of the Authority. Some submissions suggest that the Authority has too many politicians and not enough direct representation from the schools. One of the representatives on the Authority of the ACT Council of P & C Associations expressed concern at the weakness and lack of political power of parent organizations at both Board and Authority levels. But the main concern is the limited extent of participation of parents and other interested community members in the general life and curriculum of the school, and the limited influence that they exert on decisions in the schools.

Some principals complain about the problem of getting enough parents interested to run elections for school boards. Indeed we were told that attendance at P & C functions, though varying greatly from high school to high school, is usually poor, although it increases significantly when a contentious issue is to be discussed. This is recognized by parents who have suggested to us that the reason for limited parent participation in high schools is that parents assist more readily whilst their children are at primary school but have "had enough" by the time their children reach high school. The differences in size and structure between primary and high schools obviously contributes to this feeling. Primary schools encourage parent involvement and understanding of school organization and curriculum. High schools where teacher contact is more limited and faculty structures exist are somewhat more daunting. The Council of P & C's submits that school principals and staffs do not do anywhere near enough to encourage parents to participate. They state bluntly that ".. it is common for parents entering schools to feel unwelcome", and complain of officious attitudes, paucity of information on curriculum and assessment, difficulties in arranging interviews with staff, isolation of teachers from community interests, and "... obvious rigid disciplinarian attitudes and the tone of an institution that reflects an insensitivity to the hundreds of young people within the school's walls."

There is little doubt of the philosophical commitment of the ACT system to parent participation. Hughes, in the inaugural Currie Lecture, promoted the view that the quality of education in government schools would be enhanced by parents being personally involved. "Informed parental interest and participation help to ensure high standards and make easier and more rewarding the tasks of the educators and administrators." The school system should be "... one which offers freedom of choice to parents and in which their participation is a vital element." The Campbell Report gave strong support to parent participation, particularly as a means of opening schools to a wider range of expertise, opinions and experiences. The "Guiding Principles" of the Interim Authority proposed a highly collaborative approach and suggested structures to realize it. The Council of P & C's, despite their critical submission, claim with some pride that: "The ACT Schools Authority has been unique in being the first education system in Australia to foster the partnership role of parents in the governance of schools. Now state education systems across Australia recognize the value of the participative approach to schooling and provide structures and resources acknowledging the developing role of parents in education."

As it is with devolution so it is with participation. The ACT has gone part way with its structures for devolution and its encouragement of parent participation, and the two are linked. Blakers traces the development of moves towards greater participation, and points the way to principles to be observed in developing it further.

"The collaboration of parents and teachers in the ACT school system was a cornerstone of its original intent and design, and this is reflected in the decision making structures established by the ACT Schools Authority Ordinance. But neither design nor structures of themselves ensure effective working relationships. These must be based in the first instance on an understanding that the relationships are new ones. In a centralized and hierarchical school system, relationships are to a large extent pre-determined by position in the structure or outside the structure. Everyone knows his/her place and area of responsibility and power - or lack of it.

In a participative system such as that in the ACT, the relationships are of more importance than recognized position, and they need to be developed in sympathy with the underlying concepts and purposes of the system. Insofar as the centralized relationships and attitudes are imported into a participative system, so far will the collaborative relationships be constrained and distorted. And this applies to within school operations as to the administrative operations of the system as a whole.

Collaboration is not an end in itself; nor should it be an excuse for setting up new structures which will do little more than serve new vested interests. It is a means towards achieving education which will be appropriate in quality and character to both the common and the differing needs of children in a changing society. It implies a recognition of the need for diversity, flexibility and personal concern in schooling, and of the fact that the school is as much a part of the community as the pupils for whom it caters."

Blakers is emphatic about the desirability of representativeness of committee structures and the relative roles of the Authority, boards and other committees. She provides an antidote to the mistaken notion of autonomy addressed earlier in this report. The system design suggested in the Hughes Report was a compromise between a centralized system and "... a polar reaction to this". Blakers suggests an operating principle of freedom within control.

"Schools within such a system of education would see themselves as inter-dependent units in an overall pattern of education which had clearly defined and commonly accepted aims. In this concept, each school has a dual responsibility: to the children in its care and to the welfare of the system as a whole; that is, to all children. The independence of each school community would then be circumscribed in three ways:

* by the need to accept a common basis of social and educational aims, as determined by a central authority representative of all those concerned in schooling: teachers, parents, students, administrators
* by the need to consider the welfare of all children in the system
* by the need for coherence and, if necessary, co-ordination between stages of education.

This in turn implies a role of oversight and restraint to be played by the system centrally. To fulfil its responsibility, the system must be prepared to use its powers of restraint and control where necessary: that is, to enforce its decisions in matters affecting the basic aims and overall welfare of the system. This includes such matters as the allocation of resources according to need, the setting of maximums and conditions for school charges and ensuring that the demands of the articulate and the influential are not accorded undue weight."

Through the effective operation of participative, representative structures the Authority can be alerted early to difficulties or potential problems which might require intervention. We discuss appropriate mechanisms in Chapter 10.

The responsibilities of school boards are spelt out in the Ordinance but it is not surprising that those functions relating to the general running and organization of schools took precedence over consideration of the means to ensure the development of relationships between the school and the community and between the school and community organizations. During the first years of high enthusiasm, as school communities worked together to formulate philosophies and programs firm links between participant groups seemed unnecessary.

Board members to whom we spoke, particularly parent and student members, were generally unclear or unspecific about communication between themselves and their electorates. We did however see some excellent examples of board reports to student and parent associations.

Elected representatives often feel isolated and, without adequate support, unable to effectively fulfil their responsibilities to share the insights which come from their own participation. Not only does this limit their own value but also further alienates the students and parents they represent.

In their submission to the Review the ACT Council of P & Cs noted:

> At present new members of high school (and primary) boards have to rely on ad hoc advice from a variety of sources to explain how the system works, what the Board's role under the ACT Schools Authority Ordinance is and of the support services available. These sources of information include advice from members serving a second or third term, the principal and teachers who 'know' the system, occasional in-service courses offered at the O'Connell Education Centre, advice from Authority nominees on Boards and advice from Schools Authority Liaison Officers.
>
> New parent members of Boards have, in our view been disadvantaged by the varying quality and quantity of the advice provided. Teachers know the system; parents have to search for the relevant information and may spend a great deal of their first year on the Board learning how the system works."

These problems are obviously exacerbated by the fact that only 18% of parent members of boards surveyed had served more than two years and only 4% of students more than one year.

It is the view of the Committee that the term of office of board members should be increased to two years and that half the membership should retire, but be eligible for re-election, each year.

We return, in Chapter 11, to discuss system implications of providing more satisfactory support and information for members of the community. If representative structures at the school and Authority level are to be effective they require strong support from an informed electorate. The involvement of increased numbers of parents was a priority in many of the schools we visited.

Blakers lists a number of categories of action that schools could undertake to develop parent involvement. Parent organizations, particularly in Victoria, are publishing "parent-action" manuals of practical suggestions. In Victoria too, a major government initiative on school planning and review, the School Improvement Plan, is based on parent and community participation. But it seems to us that parent participation is still at something of a standstill in the the ACT, and for a shift to occur not only practical suggestions are required but debate has to be encouraged on whether greater parent participation is desirable in the interests of children. This debate is critical for the high schools.

Collective Wisdom

Throughout this report we shall refer to the need for a rationale for maximum participation of all the parties concerned with education. The first of these is "collective wisdom", a notion

firmly embedded in inaugural principles of the ACT system as argued for instance, by Hughes and Campbell. This can be more finely pointed by reference to a model of school curriculum development suggested by Joseph Schwab of Chicago University in the early 70's. Schwab examined attempts to base curriculum in schools on various theories, including theories of learning, of sociology, and the structure of knowledge. These attempts had consistently failed. The alternative was to treat curriculum as a practical and eclectic exercise, to draw upon many sources to match ideas against current practice, and to rehearse changes as carefully as possible in discussion with all interested and affected parties. This approach draws upon "different lights" and it avoids the possibility of disruptive change or the danger of particular power groups or ideologues dominating curriculum development. It also avoids treating students as abstractions, as "minds" to be filled with theoretical knowledge by "teacher-experts".

It regards curriculum in action in schools as treating "real things: real arts, real teachers, real children, things richer and different from their theoretical representations." It is a careful and deliberate approach which will require "... the formation of a new public and a new means of communication among its constituent members. Deliberation requires consideration of the widest possible variety of alternatives if it is to be most effective. Each alternative must be viewed in the widest variety of lights. Ramifying consequences must be traced to all parts of the curriculum. The desirability of each alternative must be felt out, "rehearsed" by a representative variety of all those who must live with the consequences of the chosen action." Schwab attacks the tendency to maintain curriculum in watertight packages. The eclectic approach, he suggests "... will require renunciation of the specious privileges and hegemonies by which we maintain the fiction that problems of science curriculum, for example, have no bearing on problems of English literature or the social studies. The aim here is not a dissolving of specialization and special responsibilities. Quite the contrary: if the variety of lights we need are to be obtained, the variety of specialized interests, competences and habits of mind which characterize education must be cherished and nurtured. The aim, rather, is to bring the members of this variety to bear on curriculum problems by communication with one another." This comment pinpoints a major problem in ACT high schools. As we have said before and as we shall say again in even more detail in a later chapter, the present curriculum is generally stagnant because of "hegemonies and specious privileges" maintained in subject department structures. The high schools have only begun to open up debate on content to wider communities. The approach is not genuinely eclectic and it does not capture the full potential of collective wisdom.

The Restoration of Nurturance

Schwab does not specifically develop an argument for parent participation in curriculum, although he does not exclude parents or other "lay" constituents in an "educational community". We believe that such an argument can be mounted, and we give further

reason for this by sketching our second category of argument supporting parent participation: the restoration of nurturance. The Review Committee members in their visits to high schools became disturbed about reports from teachers and principals on the numbers of their students who came from one-parent families, and the numbers reported to have already left home to live on their own. We sought advice from a Canberra psychiatrist, Dr Don Lawrence, on what is happening to these young people. Dr Lawrence submitted recent overseas research by Uri Bronfenbrenner which traces the breakdown in family structure in Western style societies and consequent social alienation amongst our young expressed as boredom, apathy, and, increasingly, aggressive and anti-social behaviour. We have not been able to find research in Canberra which replicates Bronfenbrenner's work locally but we view with concern Dr Lawrence's inference that similar problems abound here and in other Australian communities.

While our concern for these young people goes beyond the school, clearly, in this report, our responsibility is to consider what can and should be done in schools. As will be seen in later chapters, in addressing curriculum and the "crisis of purpose" that Collins and Hughes suggest that we face in high schools, one approach is to focus the curriculum of high schools on "induction into adulthood". Part of this shift requires the inclusion in curriculum content of social issues of concern to students.

We note the comments of some principals and teachers, and also the reservations expressed by Blakers about the extent to which parents can and want to participate in curriculum in schools. On the evidence before us we have concluded that many parents do, in fact, wish to participate in decisions about what is taught in schools and how students are taught and learn.

Accordingly in later chapters we shall suggest how this participation can be achieved more effectively. At this point, suffice it to say that there are two points of entry for parents. The first is, if high schools are going to reconsider the directions they are to take and their purposes, a shift cannot occur without strong parental support. The second is in questions of relationships. As will be seen, many teachers and students in high schools express concern about their relationships. We suggest that many parents are equally concerned about their relationships with their children. There is common ground to be shared by parents, teachers and students, not to be dealt with in artificial debate, but centred around for instance the institutional arrangements of the school. In high schools, concern for the problems of the adolescent group should provide a strong motivation for the development and maintenance of school policies. By capturing, sharing and dealing with this concern schools may contribute to a restoration of nurturance. The Committee of Review then commends the fact that high schools in the ACT have board structures which provide opportunities for parents to have a say in the directions taken by schools. We believe however that their influence could and should be greater and that the time has come for this question to be canvassed by the community under the auspices of the ACT Schools Authority.

Modelling Democractic Processes

Our discussions on participation thus far have made little mention of the part to be played by the most important members of the school communities, the students themselves. We believe that not only should they be made central to the participatory process, but indeed that this process should be used quite deliberately to model the democratic process. Philospher Jurgen Habermas describes democracy as "discursive will-formation in ordinary language", which simply means people being able collectively to discuss, in their own terms, under what conditions they want to live and what futures they wish to pursue. The ethics of democracy are to be found in completely open communication and in relationships based on mutual respect.

Eric Fromm reminds us that democracy is an emergent and fragile concept subjected to much abuse: we need little reminder of the various totalitarian regimes that exist under its name. Whatever difficulty we have with the concept, if as part of our purposes in education we claim to be preparing students to live in a democratic society, we ought to examine how effective the experience of living in a school is in modelling the democratic process.

In a later chapter we shall examine research on the views of students about school life but we foreshadow here their criticism that efforts to develop student participation, as for instance with Student Representative Councils, are tokenistic. The view of the Council of P & C's that schools are closed authoritarian institutions has been noted. If schools are aiming to model democracy, they are not presently a good model. As one member of the think-tank suggested, however, that is not surprising if the system itself does not act consistently with the democratic principles upon which it is predicated. Under these principles, the members of the Schools Authority endeavour to exercise governance by a process of debate leading to decisions and action. The reality is that powerful interests sometimes influence the process and determine it in their own interests. How, for instance, in an industrial setting is it possible to shift teachers from self to client interest? Another member of the think-tank suggests that a long history of centralized control in education makes it difficult for the democratic process to develop in schools. In a centralized system the teacher or the school can blame the governors, political or administrative, when things go wrong. This, he suggests is the model for the teacher-student relationship: it is antithetical to the development of personal responsibility in students.

Participation in education requires the shift of power and responsibility from the centre to the periphery. Democratic modelling means giving students opportunities to exercise responsibility.

Summary

One of the problems making it difficult for schools to respond to the need for change is that of the limited participation of parents at the high school level. The ACT system has a philosophical commitment to parent participation, which has now been adopted also by state systems, and the structures are in place to allow participation to take place. The problem, however, is not one of structure so much as of relationships. The system and the schools have not done enough to foster links between representatives (parent, teacher and student) and their electorates nor to inform the broad community and its representatives about their roles and functions. The generally short term of office of school board members is also a problem in this regard.

We recommend that the term of office of school board members should be increased to two years and that half the membership should retire, but be eligible for re-election, each year.

Both strategies and the rationale for increased parental participation need to be clearly addressed. While many schools have expressed the desire for increased parent involvement, there are undoubtedly a great number of teachers and probably parents, who do not really understand why it is important. Real change in curriculum cannot be brought about without firm parent support. Furthermore, the development of better relationships between adults and young people is a matter of common concern and needing collaborative action between teachers and parents.

We recommend that the Schools Authority should ensure that the whole issue of parental involvement in school is widely canvassed.

Furthermore, we believe, that if schools claim to prepare students to take part in adult life in a democratic society, then they should model democracy and enable students to practise responsibility.

We now examine technological and social change and its implications for schooling with regard both to the system and to the individual schools. We also examine the question of educational standards.

We return to the questions of schools and changes in the communities of which they are a part, and their responses to these changes. There is little need for us to canvass here the ever-increasing volume of material in books and other media on accelerating technological changes and their attendant social and political implications. Futurologists such as Kahn, Toffler and Jones, are widely read. Their common argument is that we are being swept along by technological and social change without feeling that we are able to influence the direction of the changes. In social governance this concern underlies increased activitity at the local level, as for instance, increased interest in local government, the devolution of bureaucracies into local units, and the development of social collaborative action in the delivery of social services to local communities. The arguments of the 1970's about whether schools react to social change or bring it about are now seldom heard. It is now accepted that schools are among the places where change is confronted. As a result certain key social issues, can, with advantage be brought to a head in discussion of purpose and content in schooling, especially in high schools. For instance, it is now being realized that the argument on high school curriculum needs to be set in the context of the debate on a comprehensive youth policy. On a more specific technological issue, high schools are going to have to decide immediately what to do about computers in education: discussing the ramifications of this is a means of parents, students and teachers confronting a major technological advance collectively. Other social issues such as sexism and multiculturalism are already part of the social debate in our restless schools.

In centralized education systems these issues were not debated openly or extensively, but were filtered through hierarchies of experts in the educational bureaucracy. The arguments can no longer be handled in these ways. They are matters for social consent and consensus. To be responsive to change schools need to be open to channels of community influence. Schools also constitute a forum in which consensus has to be found for curriculum action to ensue. The importance of this is seen at two levels. If in the devolved ACT system a school makes its own policy on curriculum, the widest possible debate needs to take place on the underlying social issues to achieve consensus and commitment. As Blakers points out, if this debate is not comprehensive and does not include parents, any changes that the school may make are liable to be misinterpreted and result in energy sapping tensions within the school community. At the systemic level, if part of the curriculum process is for the Authority to develop guidelines on social issues as a wider framework within which schools may make decisions on curriculum, the responsiveness of the Authority may be measured in terms of the encouragement and support it gives to participative debate in school settings, and the care and sensitivity with which it gathers and interprets these debates. We consider that insufficient discussion is occurring in high school communities, and that because of perceptions of what the role of the Authority should be, insufficient leadership and sensitivity is being exercised by the Authority, to ensure that schools and the system are responsive to their communities.

Inevitably this has led to uncertainties and misunderstandings on the part of parents and teachers about what schools are doing and should be doing.

Social Change

The Club of Rome report, "No Limits to Learning" (Botkin 1979) canvasses a number of potentially disastrous issues such as over-population, the widening poverty gap between nations, depleting non-renewable resources, and the arms race and matches the list with a description of scientific and technological advance unparalleled in history. It suggests the emergence of an enormous tangle of problems in which unprecedented human fulfilment and ultimate catastrophe are both possible. What will actually happen, it says, will depend decisively on human understanding and action.

> "Humanity is pitifully unprepared to cope with the formidable challenges, threats, and complexities on the immediate horizon. We must come to understand at least two critical points. One is that humanity as a whole is moving rapidly towards a momentous crossroads where there will be no room for mistakes. The second is that we must break this vicious circle of increasing complexity and lagging understanding while it still is possible to exert influence and some control over our own destiny and future."

Despite the seriousness of these problems the Club report is essentially optimistic. It is a Toynbee style challenge-and-response approach to global issues which suggests that mankind has the capacity to develop learning systems adequate to find solutions to these problems. This survey of trends in education systems throughout the world suggests that adaptations in schooling are regarded as one of the major strategies for national and international survival and progress. Learning generally must become much more "anticipatory" and "participatory", we must develop the capacity and habit as communities to read social futures, anticipate consequences, and plan our ways of dealing with what we want to happen. Such an approach to schooling may require massive shifts in our thinking. Education systems in Western style democracies have been notoriously slow to respond to social change. We may not be able to afford such a lag in the critical futures facing us. The Club report gives a further dimension to community participation in schooling, and a note of urgency for schools to become more responsive to the views of the community and the emerging needs of students.

While we recognize that all periods in history have brought changes in the lives of those who lived through them, we also believe that the extent and rate of change in the Australian community has increased over the last 50 years. We wish simply to remind our readers that high schools are preparing students for unknown problems which adults have not had to face. It is useful to reflect briefly on how rapidly life styles in Australia have changed, and how change has accelerated, during the life span of most adults with children at high schools. From the relatively steady state of the late 30s, our society has altered dramatically and changes continue to occur at an accelerating rate. A small kaleidoscope of randomly selected developments makes the point. Since the 60s popular music has taken a new path, new and distinctive teenage dress and hair styles have appeared, social idealism has become a major concern in popular culture and in literature, and issues associated with the Vietnam War polarised the nation. At the same time female participation in the work force became much more common together with demands for equality of men and women in all fields. Conventional morality has changed, sexual license has increased considerably and become much more overt, marital breakdown has become more frequent and accepted. Minority groups, which had been virtually disregarded suddenly assumed an identity and an importance which was to have profound effects. Technological changes have, of course, profoundly changed everyday life in Australia. Television, introduced in 1956, spread rapidly in the 60s and 70s bringing with it a much more immediate awareness of the world, a new sophistication, and a taste for new life-styles. Computers followed.

Magazines, television, films and advertisements placed before young people the allures of the pop-culture as the teenage dollar is wooed by the entertainment industry. Alcohol, cigarettes and other drugs, and consumer goods are readily available and their use is made to seem necessary for the sophistication and adulthood that many young people crave. Even the electronically generated noise and colour of some pastime activities develop a taste for the ephemeral, for quick results without great physical or mental effort. Other examples remind us how greatly changed are young people's expectations today compared with the days from which date most of our current educational practices.

While less spectacular, of perhaps even greater significance, are the changing patterns of part time employment among 15 to 19 year old students in Australia. While we do not have access to figures in the ACT the national figures, gleaned from reports of the Bureau of Labour Market Research and the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission (1982), are worthy of consideration as it seems likely that these would also be reflected among the age group in the ACT.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) defines full-time workers as those who usually work 35 hours or more per week, and part-time workers as those who usually work less than 35 hours. Persons employed part-time worked 16 hours per week on average in August 1981, while the corresponding figure for full-time workers was 40 hours.

The percentage and number of 15-19 year olds in full-time employment declined considerably from 1966-81, as illustrated in Table 1. We note that the decline in full-time employment has been much more noticeable for teenage females than for teenage males. Furthermore, almost all growth in male teenage employment between 1971-81 came from increased part-time employment. For teenage females, a sharp drop in full-time employment was offset by a rapid rise in part-time jobs.

Of particular interest to the Committee of Review is the fact that a substantial part of the growth in part-time youth employment in the last 10 years was associated with an increasing overlap between education and labour force participation. For example, the proportion of all full-time teenage students in the labour force increased from 5% to 27% from 1971-81. In 1981, full-time students constituted almost 75% of the teenage part-time labour force. The proportion of 15-19 year old school students working part-time increased from an estimated 4% in 1971 to 17% in 1981. In the same period, the proportion of teenage part-time employment filled by school students rose from 28% in 1971 to 58% in 1981.

In 1980, teenage part-time employees had an average wage of $3.28 per hour and worked for 11 hours weekly, giving average gross earnings of approximately $36 weekly. Teenage male and female part-time employment is concentrated in the wholesale and retail trades. This is shown in Table 2. Part-time work for young people is concentrated in jobs of low-skill content.

The Committee can only speculate on the reasons for the growth in part-time employment amongst full-time school, TAFE and other tertiary teenage students, but it regards the following matters to be significant:

* changes in technology and work organization;
* employer demand for young part-time rather than for older and more costly full-time workers;
* student interest in gaining work experience;
* the economic position of students and their families.

Little information is available on the characteristics of full-time school students in part-time jobs, or on changes in the characteristics of that cohort in the last 10-15 years. However, the ACER's Youth In Transition study found that in 1980, 11.3% of high achievement 18-19 year old school students were unemployed, engaged only in part-time work or part-time study, or had withdrawn from education and employment, as compared to 27.6% of low achievement persons of the same age.

We conclude that since growth in the participation of full-time secondary school students in part-time employment between 1971-81 has been so substantial that it is timely to pose two questions:

1. What are the effects on the educational performance of secondary school students of their increased participation in the labour market? Should there be changes in the curriculum to ensure that this cohort is not disadvantaged educationally from participation in both education and employment?

2. Should schools accelerate the part-time employment of teenagers by, for example, altering timetables and homework policies, or should the part-time labour force participation of teenage students be slowed or reduced by changes in the educational demands of secondary schools?

Especially in the ACT, we must view with concern the likely inconsistency between the response of the schools and the TAFE sectors to the increased numbers of full-time teenage students who are part-time workers because of the apparent lack of effective consultation in this area to which we refer later.

There will be those who will wonder why we have not given greater emphasis to the need for more education and sophisticated training in computer-related areas. We have no doubt that computers will increasingly impact on the daily lives of all people and their use will become more and more commonplace in education. There is therefore a need for teachers to become "literate" in this area if they are to help students to understand computers, to know how computers can assist them in their learning, both directly and through the impact of computers on information technology, to become aware of the applications of computers in industry and commerce, and to understand the impact that computers are likely to have upon their lives and work. Each of these areas must be accommodated in the new curriculum. We recognize that there are many areas in which future job growth will favour professional and technical level jobs requiring the use of increasingly sophisticated technological equipment, including computers. We are however also conscious of the view of Leven and Rumberger (1983) who adopt a more pessimistic view that the expansion of the low skill jobs will vastly outstrip the growth of high technology jobs.

Furthermore, there is a real danger that the proliferation of high technology industries and their products is far more likely to reduce the skill requirements for jobs rather than to upgrade them. If this view is correct, it has serious implications for educators whose concern is to ensure that all citizens have the opportunity to lead productive and stimulating lives.

TABLE 1

FULL-TIME LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION OF 15-19 YEAR OLDS, 1966-1981 (i)

Year	Males		Females	
	No.	%	No.	%
1966	318,800	61.3	296,200	57.1
1981	293,100	45.3	213,800	34.5

(i) TEC Learning & Earning Vol 2 Table A.16.2

TABLE 2

Industry Structure of Employment [a], by Age, Sex, and Full-Time/Part-Time Status, Australia, 1981

Industry Division	Male Youth		Female Youth		Adult Males		Adult Females	
	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time
	percent							
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting	5.1	*	1.0	*	2.7	*	1.1	1.9
Mining	1.9	*	*	*	2.9	*	*	*
Manufacturing	29.1	9.0	13.5	3.5	27.0	12.0	21.6	7.6
Electricity, Gas, Water	2.4	*	0.9	*	3.8	*	0.8	*
Construction	11.0	5.8	1.3	*	7.7	*	1.1	1.9
Wholesale, Retail Trade	22.7	49.8	25.2	48.1	14.9	12.1	15.1	20.8
Transport, Storage	5.0	*	2.6	*	8.2	6.8	2.5	1.5
Communication	1.9	*	1.5	*	3.3	*	2.1	1.4
Finance, etc[b]	7.5	*	19.6	3.2	7.2	9.5	9.3	8.7
Public Administration, Defence	3.9	*	5.9	*	6.9	*	6.1	2.9
Community Services	5.4	6.8	22.6	16.8	12.1	30.6	34.2	38.1
Entertainment, etc[c]	4.0	16.3	5.6	22.7	3.1	13.5	5.5	14.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* Denotes a relative standard error greater than 20 per cent
a Relates to employed wage and salary earners
b Finance, insurance, real estate and business services
c Entertainment, recreation, restaurants, hotels and personal services.

Source: Unpublished data from ABS Labour Force Survey, August 1981.

Community Attitudes to Change in Schools

> "People who work in high schools have never lacked advice about how to do their jobs better. Lately, high school reform has become a growth industry, ... the giving of advice to save the schools has a long tradition behind it." (James and Tyack 1983)

The comment refers to the USA, but it certainly applies in Australia as well. The authors trace the history of reports advocating high school reform and invite readers to think of these reports as position papers in the continuing debate over the interactive principles of liberty, equality and efficiency in a rapidly changing society.

Their comments about our own times strike a chord in the minds of this Committee of Review.

> "In conservative times as in the 1890's, the 1950's and the 1980's, for example - the key notes of 'reform' have typically been a focus on the talented ... calls for greater emphasis on the basics and greater stress on academics in general and concern about incoherence in the curriculum and a lack of discipline. The editorials and articles on public education in popular magazines of the 1950's might be reprinted today without any substantial change and be fashionable once again. By constrast, in more liberal eras, - the progressive decades, the 1930's, the 1960's or the early 1970's - attention shifted to the 'disadvantaged' and to broadening the functions of schooling ... Calls for change in both kinds of periods reflect the anxieties and the aspirations of the time and an image of a preferred future." (James and Tyack 1983)

The Committee of Review is well aware that the prevailing mood of the Australian community is one of conservatism. Because we shall not call for a move back to the strategies of former times, and because we are confident that some of our statements may be interpreted quite incorrectly as only a further move towards trivialization of the curriculum and an erosion of quality of teaching and learning, we propose to comment on the question of the maintenance of standards of excellence in the teaching and learning of students during their important teenage years.

Before doing so, however, we need to examine briefly the nature of adolescence and to indicate how high schools are currently providing for the needs of this group of young people.

There is no one view of adolescence as a stage of human development. There are those who see it as a stage at which young people are simply making cultural adjustments. Others point to the obvious physical, cognitive and psychological changes which are taking place. Certainly all accept that the growing independence of the adolescent, the need to develop new relationships, and vocational aspirations together with rapid physical development all lead to temporary imbalances which are generally resolved in adulthood.

At the beginning of the chapter we commented upon some of the social and cultural factors which make this process difficult for young people in the 80s.

All of these factors make the period of transition which we call adolescence a time of confusion for many and uncertainty and even unhappiness for some.

Accordingly we were not surprised but indeed delighted, to find that the Secondary Principals took as the theme of their conference last year "From dependence to independence", because we see high schools as one of the most important institutions which assist and support young people in their transition from childhood to adulthood. Together with the family, although second to it, schools are a major mechanism for the socialization of young people. They assist young people to make the transition to adulthood and to establish mature relationships with others. It is for this reason that the Committee commends the fact that high schools in the ACT cater for members of both sexes. We recognize, however, that co-educational schools must acknowledge and compensate where necessary the disadvantaged position in which girls may unwittingly be placed both in some special areas and in other aspects of their school life.

Schools also assist young people to become independent of their parents, to prepare for work and to acquire a set of values, as they seek to satisfy their needs for status and recognition, for independence, for achievement and for a sense of values. These developmental needs can be either assisted or thwarted by schools.

As Kohlberg (1970) says,

> "Anyone who listens to adolescents knows they are preoccupied in one way or another with formulating ideals for bringing order and value to their lives."

Piaget suggests that moral development parallels cognitive development and thus they are able to think about the world not only as it is, but as it might be. We are all aware that adolescents are frequently critical of the established order of things. It may well be that this accounts for the rebelliousness of young people which older people have always found puzzling, and sometimes objectionable.

It is not surprising that some adolescents reject the formality, direction and authoritarianism of some schools which frustrate the desires of young people for status, for independence and for personal achievement. In such cases there is an arrest of development which results from the use of fear of failure, punishment or withdrawal of support to achieve this end.

We can only speculate on the long term impacts of this arrested development when we see the clearly adolescent behaviour of some who have reached adult years.

Hall in "Moral Education in Theory and Practice" states,

> "It is difficult to facilitate higher stages of development in schools that have institutionalized ... reward and punishment with back scratching. Creating an effective moral education programme may thus require opening the whole school to a recognition of the rights of individuals (teachers as well as students) and to a more democratic process of decision making. One can hardly teach the skills of rational moral thought in a school in which the authority structures are impervious to rational development."

One study of four schools found,

> "...when a school ties the child sternly to a disciplining structure - when it presents the child with the task of keeping constant track of the rules of acceptable behaviour - it may defeat its own goal of shaping a morally mature individual. It may hold him longer to a relatively immature level of conscience... ... when the quality of authority in a school is more flexible and benign, and when the child group is active, powerful and in constant process of negotiating its own rules of work and play, the child may be moved even at young ages to a more generalized plane of thought." (Biber and Menuchin 1971)

The use of competition and fear of failure stressed by some teachers adds to the problems of adolescents with a need for achievement. There is little doubt that such competition relative to others among those who cannot hope to do anything but fail, is to invite aggressive behaviour.

The "Adaptive School"

The opposite of such a bureaucratic approach to teaching is democracy. Only a democratic model of the kind suggested in this report can lead to the adaptive school favoured by so many writers and thinkers in recent times.

As Glasser (1977) says in Adaptive Education

> "The organization of the school will need to change in order to facilitate adaptive programmes. By its nature, the conventional classroom imposes a certain social climate and organizational structure on the school, and most traditional methods of school organization emphasize particular roles for teachers and school administrations. How do these roles and the organizational and social structure of the school change as decision making is shared with the students, as the school takes increased advantage of utilizing options and resources in the community, and as more and more activity is concerned with maintaining a dynamic structure which can adjust to the various achievements of individual children and groups of children? Answers to these questions are currently being sought by many school systems."

In this report we have spoken on a number of occasions about the "caring" school and the "adaptive" school. We are aware that there are those who hold strongly to the view that any moves within a school to endeavour to take up Glasser's challenge to make schools caring and adaptive will be seen as a sign of weakness which will put intellectual rigour at risk.

We believe that a school which genuinely cares about its students by definition places great emphasis upon the intellectual development of its students. A concern for students means that a school is concerned to ensure that students are motivated to attain, and indeed that they do attain, their full intellectual potential. This cannot be achieved by lowering expectations or allowing levels of performance to slip.

Incentives to Learn

It is claimed by some, particularly in defence of examinations, that competition is both essential and desirable in this regard. It is a preparation for the competitive world outside. We acknowledge that competition in a wide range of human endeavours is a fact of life. There is competition for entry to tertiary institutions, for employment and for promotion. There is competition in sport. Competition against others can be stimulating and productive. It can also be negative and destructive. It is most positive when it is entered into willingly by competitors, when the enjoyment comes from participation and when not winning is not construed as failure. There are occasions in a high school when such competition is educationally productive. We believe, however, that to use competition against others as a primary educational strategy is potentially damaging to the majority of students. We are not even convinced that it is in the best interests of the most talented students. It is far more productive in an educational sense if an environment can be created in which the pursuit of excellence is fostered by students constantly endeavouring to improve on their own performance - in other words, competing with themselves. We have referred to this elsewhere in the context of changes in methods of assessment and reporting.

We believe that there are three proper incentives for young people to learn. The first is that which is central to this report. It is the motivation which results from the study of satisfying and interesting courses of study and assessment methods in which students have a personal stake. The second is that which results from the adolescent's desire to achieve status and recognition. This does not need to be achieved at the expense of others, indeed young people enjoy sharing their successes. We understand, however, that family and peers are central to ascribing this status and recognition. Those young people who lack the interest and support of caring families and peers clearly suffer a handicap in this regard. The importance of teachers in the lives of these young people cannot be overstated.

We note with interest the "Key Worker Scheme" which has been adopted in schools in South Australia. Here concerned adults who are chosen by selected students themselves take a personal interest in the affairs of the students. These adults provide the source of status and recognition which for various reasons is lacking in the lives of these students.

The third incentive is one which needs to be approached with caution. It is the incentive in the vocational impulse which results from adolescents' desires for independence. This is not only an incentive for those who wish to leave high school at the end of their compulsory years. It is also a motive for those who wish to enter colleges, and ultimately undertake tertiary studies.

There is no doubt however, that the former group, of whom there are few in the ACT, work more willingly at school if they believe that what they are learning will be useful to them in their lives and work when they leave school. Clearly the vocational impulse is given even greater power at times like these when unemployment is high.

It is of course, a corollary, that if they believe that there is no chance, or little chance, of getting a job, their motivation to work at school diminishes.

Rigour in Learning

We are also aware that there are others who argue that a comprehensive system of schooling of the kind found in the ACT achieves equality at the cost of quality in terms of average performance.

The Committee does not accept the view. It notes the statements of Husen:

> The assessment of the standard of elite students at the pre-university level does not support the contention that systems with broader access and with relatively high retention rates through upper secondary school do not succeed in producing elite students. An elite can be cultivated within a comprehensive educational system. Whether or not the elite produced in such a system is worth its price is another question. One should, however, recognize that, in selective systems, the high standard of the elite is bought at the price of more limited opportunities for the majority of the students." (Husen 1983)

But to return to the schools in the ACT. We received submissions which suggested that to move too far away from traditional curriculum would be to lose rigour in learning. They implied that rigour is only possible in the traditional subject disciplines and that anything other than these subjects is a "soft option". They suggested that to be rigorous a subject should be seen as preparation for university entrance. We cannot endorse this view. We have seen craft subjects being given a strong theoretical content so that they achieve deserved parity of esteem with the traditional academic offerings. It may be argued that a subject is being studied rigorously when it is absorbing the student, when systematic learning procedures are being followed and when the students are motivated to seek excellence. This, of course, is not to suggest that content is unimportant. The Committee is aware of the danger of introducing courses into high schools which are shallow. We shall deal with this matter when we discuss curricula in high schools.

The competitive approach to schooling in the ACT is reflected in its systems of assessment and certification. This is a combination of the academic and vocational purposes at work. The debate on these purposes becomes confused with a number of issues. Those who argue for a "return to the basics" in high schools usually do so on some assumptions about "standards" having fallen and blame this deterioration on what they see to be worthless options in curriculum and the absence of external examinations or centrally prescribed syllabuses.

It is difficult to confirm or to refute these claims with any degree of certainty. The Committee accepts that pupils do in fact leave schools at all levels with an education which cannot be considered adequate. It takes the view, however, that these individual cases will be detected when teachers and parents work more closely together. Furthermore, it believes that schools, with support from the system should have the machinery and the resources to take appropriate action when and where the problems arise.

The fact remains that the number of such students who leave schools illiterate or innumerate by normal standards is small. We do well to remind ourselves of the very great majority of our young people who reach acceptable standards and of the many who reach very high standards indeed.

Such statements do not, however, set aside criticism of high schools in the ACT and elsewhere, nor ignore the feeling of uneasiness that people have expressed about high school education in the ACT. We do not reject criticism of high schools as totally unfounded.

Certainly the Committee of Review considers that the need for schools to be centres of excellence is unarguable.

The Educational Standards Debate

Some submissions to the Review Committee have suggested that "standards" depend on clear direction and firm control by educational systems. Education systems prior to the 50's had a quite different clientele, and the very selectivity of the approach ensured low retention rates. Students left school earlier and could be absorbed in the job market. The position today is vastly different as we have, rhetorically at least, committed ourselves to secondary education for all, and the shrinking job market is ensuring that students will be encouraged to remain longer in secondary schools or training institutions by offering more attractive and useful courses.

Notwithstanding this, the measures we have of standards, in language and mathematics for instance, indicate relative increase not a decline in performance. Furthermore, the effect upon standards of administrative sanctions upon schools is no more than speculative. There is no evidence of causal connection.

Nonetheless, the question of the need for "a return to the basics" hangs over schools like a cloud. It is raised frequently in or by the media, and usually takes the form of an editorial, an employer or someone from higher education deploring the decline in areas such as literacy and numeracy. As Hughes, a Rhodes scholar says,

> "Such statements imply a number of things - none of them correct. They imply a period when all school children had a basic mastery in reading, writing and arithmetic. Records of performance show this to be false. In spite of a limited standard of performance, a high proportion of students never reached those basic standards. Even worse, the more capable students were not encouraged to go on beyond them.

> They imply that the levels of performance have declined since this golden age of literacy. The evidence, and it is inadequate since poor records were kept early, indicates against this. It is reasonable to conclude, from the evidence available, that the general standards in all these areas have not declined, but may have improved.
>
> The most significant, and the most dangerous, implication of the "back to the basics" statement, however, is that the limited basics of literacy and numeracy which applied in the past would be adequate for today's needs, and a good basis to meet the challenges of tomorrow.
>
> Such a conclusion would not only be false, but as has been said above, would be dangerous. Routine skills in computation, the ability to read and to write simple statements were the basic of the required skills, 'the three R's'. They would be totally inadequate for those who have to operate as responsible and contributing citizens in today's society.
>
> The worst feature of the argument about the basics is that it has distracted educators from the really important task. Speculations about past achievements and about possibilities of decline miss the real point. That point relates to the urgency of providing students with the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary not only to meet present needs but also those which are predictable for the future. The real call to education is not to retreat into the past, but to give a preparation to go forward." (Hughes 1982)

Hughes argues that the early concept of the basics was introduced at a time when primary education was being developed and was completed by a minority. He contends that we should be developing 'new basics'.

> "Two aspects are important in considering what should be the 'new basics', the education to be available for the total school population. The first aspect relates to the higher expectations that a democratic society has for all its citizens. It expects them to undertake the full responsibilities of citizenship: voting intelligently, taking an interest in political issues, understanding and supporting the legal system, taking responsibilities within the community. It expects them undertake vocational responsiblities: preparing themselvto for employment, developing appropriate skills and attitues making career choices at appropriate times. It expects des, them

to develop as individuals, with a sense of self-respect, accepting the legitimate rights of others, being able to get on with others, having a range of cultural interests, developing a consistent and acceptable moral code. It is a formidable range of expectations, but it is what is meant by being a responsible citizen in a democratic society.

The second aspect is relevant to choices on the 'new basics'. This concerns the possibilities made available by technology. These begin with relatively simple developments such as calculators. With these, a wide range of arithmetical skills performed with complete accuracy becomes available to all: the implication of this availability is that an understanding of how to use such computation becomes more important. Similarly, information is now available from more services than the print, the teacher, the parent, and the printed papers. There is a flood of information, via radio and television and through recordings of many topics.

What becomes important is the capacity to assess the value of information, to judge its relevance, to use it effectively and efficiently in making decisions. The computer opens up still further levels of possibilities: in providing access to information throughout the world, in storing and analysing information, in solving problems. In this area as in the others, a capacity for performing immense quantities of lower-level skills, places an increased value on higher-level skills, on affective, aesthetic and moral decisions which can only be made by humans.

The expectations of society, the possibilities through technology - these combine to make important for each individual the choices to be made through life: intellectual, emotional, ethical and spiritual. This constitutes the new basics: what is essential to us in beng fully human in a democratic society.

The new curriculum

It should be clear that the requirements on schools to meet current and future needs cannot be met simply by adding a few subjects to the traditional form. Nor can they be met by reverting to a more primitive form which fails to recognize the value of all people in our society. The demands are for a reconstructed curriculum which takes the 'new basics' as its central concern, and seeks to find appropriate ways to organize teaching and learning.

> One promising way is the 'integrated curriculum'. This proceeds by moving from the subject-based curriculum to one based on themes, problems or topics. These are studied on an interdisciplinary basis, with particular skills and knowledge introduced as it is required for the further treatment of a theme, or the solution of a problem. The important aspect of the integration is a recognition of the wholeness and interrelationship of knowledge. It does not deal with technical aspects alone, but includes a consideration of social and moral implicatons. There are many possible forms of integration: in grouping subjects together into broader fields; in using themes as the basis for organizing learning and emphasizing the learner's active contribution; and in building on identified interests and concerns of children. It avoids the problems of fragmentation, and of piecemeal additions and overcrowding. It introduces problems of another sort: the need for a more careful planning and organizing of the curriculum; the demand for much more sophisticated and able educational personnel - teachers, administrators and curriculum specialists. These are heavy demands, but they are worth attempting if we are to release the enormous human potential for good in the children of our societies." (ibid)

Finally we draw attention to the fact that the criticisms to which we have referred inevitably have an effect on the morale of teachers. Some are confused by the conflicting demands made upon them, the changes which surround them and their students. The constant criticism of their efforts in place of support and assistance drains their confidence and energy. It is small wonder that they are unwilling and often unable to contemplate change with confidence. This adds to the loss rate of good teachers and the "burn out" of some who remain in classrooms.

The Committee recognizes, however, that the critics will not be reassured easily. The views which people hold on these matters are firmly entrenched and they are not always based upon logic or knowledge alone. Frequently people's views are coloured by loyalty to their own teachers, loyalty to particular schools, and the style of teaching and learning which they experienced in those schools.

Nor do we believe that the question will be resolved by claim and counter claim. It will only be solved by the kinds of frank public discussion and subsequent negotiations between the community, the system and the schools which is the major thrust of this report.

In conclusion we should state that most of the matters discussed in this chapter are not confined to the ACT. They are a general background to the particular matter of high schools in the ACT. We believe however, that the high schools in the ACT are well placed to meet the challenges they present.

The Schools Authority is a youthful system which is founded upon clear and commendable principles of devolution even though understandably, its high schools at least are quite profoundly influenced by the system as it was administered at the time of the split.

It is a lighthouse system and it is particularly virile in its pursuit of consistency of action and principle. Principals, school boards, and parent and teacher organizations cling strongly to a rather dimly perceived notion of school autonomy. The Authority and its Office, concerned as they are about the pressures being exerted on the schools, try to conduct the debate on what to do as openly and vigorously as possible, and to deal honestly with the conflicting interests in a highly political wider community. We have tried to suggest some issues that might be addressed as schools and the Authority seek to move the system towards increased devolution. Attempting to clarify our understanding of the intentions of the system's architects has led us to deny that autonomy, so highly prized in the educational rhetoric of the ACT, means freedom of individuals or units to operate without reference to the total context. The system in our view is not a loose aggregation of schools and is not "them" (the Authority) and "us" (the schools). We prefer to view the system as interdependent units working within consensus on community values and perceptions of students' needs, and linked together by negotiated agreements on relative responsibilities. At the risk of exchanging one set of cliches with another, instead of a devolved-participative system principle, we suggest a negotiated-collaborative one. Certain system design principles and values shifts seem to be demanded within the system. The first is that the rules of negotiation, what is to be negotiated, who is to negotiate and how negotiation is to be conducted, are themselves always to be open to debate.

A system establishes itself and then remains open to reflection upon its practices. The ACT has accepted this principle through its already well-established practice of conducting reviews. A system also needs constantly to review where power is located in the system and how power conflicts are to be resolved. We suggest that this principle might also be tested by considering the need to replace the present unsatisfactory laissez-faire approach to dealing with problems facing schools at a time of rapid change, with an agreement about the circumstances in which, and methods by which the schools might empower a regional group or the Authority to intervene on such matters.

A third principle is that the primary unit in a negotiated-collaborative system is the school community. The first focus is therefore on encouraging negotiation and collaboration in school settings, the second focus is on local relationships between schools, and the third focus is at system administration level. There needs to be a consistency in action at all levels.

A major shift in values may be required to make the system work: in the school setting, away from teachers' self-interest and parents' interest in their own child alone to a more compassionate concern for the welfare of all children in the school, and away from concern for advantage for one school to a concern to make all schools in the system effective. The Authority should have a sense of shared ownership. In a small system like the ACT this could be achieved by increased direct representation of school communities on the Authority. Finally, the health of a negotiated-collaborative system will depend on open and comprehensive debate and the free flow of ideas and information on practices.

The ACT system was set up as a means of establishing partnerships between parents, teachers and students in the education of children. The system has gone a long way to achieving this partnership. The aim is to develop schooling of a quality and purpose that will give young people the skill and abilities, the knowledge and understanding, to take control of their own lives, "...to give them power over the circumstances of their lives..." as the latest Schools Commission report so aptly puts it. The Commission report reminds us that the view of participation in schooling is the way in which parents initially involve themselves in schools "... in terms of his or her own child."

Some of the matters of concern are personal and will remain private. Others are matters of common interest to groups of children or even all children: for example, matters ranging from school uniform and corporal punishment to core curriculum. It is the generalization of matters which have significance beyond individual children that provides a rationale for community participation in schools. Without participation the connection with the experience of others that allows private concerns to be generalized into public issues cannot be made. This process is the essence of participation and a key to enabling individuals to have power over the circumstances of their lives.

It seems to the Review Committee that the high schools are presently a focal point in addressing a range of public issues.

In some way the primary schools and the colleges have not had to depart greatly from their traditional purposes: the biggest challenge has been thrown to the high schools. In a submisison one high school principal reminiscing about the exciting inauguration of the colleges and regretting the fact that high schools missed this sense of naissance, expressed the hope that it could now happen. We believe that it can and must, and furthermore that the structural conditions exist for it to happen. If ACT high schools can come to grips with a revised purpose and curriculum for Years 7-10, the system will have solved a problem which is besetting other systems in Australia and once again, provide a lead in Australian education.

It is through these developments, we believe, that the high schools will make the necessary adaptions to change and meet the challenge it presents.

Summary

The technological and social setting in which schools operate has changed profoundly since the time when most parents and teachers were at school and whence dates most current educational practice. There is a need for schooling to be seen in the context of these changes and of the development of a comprehensive youth policy. Along with the changes mentioned there has been an increase, in the wider community, in the devolution of decision making and of democratic processes. With changes in teenage employment patterns, particularly the growth of part-time work, schools may have to consider changing their established expectations and demands.

By emphasizing regulation, competition and fear of failure, high schools effectively stifle the moral and personal development of some young people. We advocate a movement towards caring and adaptive schools in order to provide opportunities for all students to grow in these respects. Some people fear, however, that such schools are incompatible with intellectual rigour. True care, we believe, includes a care for intellectual development and so values rigour, and it involves using positive incentives for young people to strive for excellence. We disagree also with the view that comprehensive education necessarily involves a levelling down process. Rigour is not a product of the academic nature of a subject, but arises when students are absorbed and motivated to strive after excellence. While we do not reject criticisms of falling standards as being entirely without foundation, and we do not believe that standards of literacy, numeracy and the mastery of knowledge are unimportant, we cannot ignore evidence that standards of achievement are not in fact declining. An implication of the cry of "back to basics" is that the traditional basics are sufficient for the modern world. We contend that this is not so and that the need is to develop "new basics" suitable for the world today and the future.

The current confusion of expectations and the resultant criticism levelled at schools is contributing markedly to low morale and burn-out among teachers.

The matter of standards provides yet another reason for full participative discussion of expectations and purposes of high schools.

The ACT system, being new and having a philosophy of participation, is well placed to face up to these questions, but the process must be carried out in a collaborative way both within school communities and in the wider system.

We believe that the Schools Authority should foster wide discussion about how schools can respond to new community needs.

Chapter 5 deals with what we consider to be the key issue confronting Australian high schools: the need for agreement on the purpose of junior secondary education.

Chapter 5 Purpose and Expectations in High Schools in the ACT

The problems of Canberra high schools are a particular example of a generalized comment on high schools by Collins and Hughes (1982):

> "They are the consequences of a structural pattern in schools which makes it much more comfortable to maintain things the way they are. School systems have been built around a central pillar of academic study to an extent which makes change difficult and uncomfortable. The very basis for the selection of students for secondary teacher education is in terms of competence in academic disciplines. Following training which emphasizes the curriculum of one or two particular academic subjects, teachers move into secondary schools usually organized around academic subject departments and participate in a system of promotion based largely on this departmental organization."

The reasons why the Canberra schools are locked into traditional patterns result partly from history and partly from neglect. The Campbell Report in 1972 raised some general concerns about the need to change the curriculum of Canberra's high schools. It was to be "complete in itself" and built around a "problem-centred core." It is still not complete in itself, and it has not shifted to any alternative base, problem-centred or otherwise. The dominance of traditional subjects - the "insular subject orientation of high schools", as the Authority's statement, Current Curriculum Practice in ACT Government Schools called it in 1981 - has been maintained. The same document suggests:

> "As is the case in the primary schools, the majority of education programs and courses of study represent a combination of local school based innovation and adapted/adopted state, overseas, commercial or local school courses or schemes."

What particular teachers teach may depend to a considerable extent on where they come from. It should be no surprise that the content is drawn mainly from New South Wales. We have already referred to the address of the Chairman of the Authority to principals of high schools and colleges at Goulburn in October 1982, in which he warned that the curriculum content in high schools has been neglected by the system since the 1972 Report. It concentrated its early efforts on assisting the innovative colleges to establish themselves, and assumed that high schools would make adaptions based upon their own resources. The impression of the Review Committee is that after some initial burst of energy and some innovations, high schools have generally settled back into traditional patterns.

How does this constitute a crisis and why is it occurring in high schools? Secondary education for all has been an ideal in Australia only since the 50s, and has been more rhetoric than reality. Secondary schools have in fact been social and intellectual sorting, labelling and credentialling agencies concerned in the main with the relatively small percentage judged suitable for tertiary training. Schools have struggled in recent decades to "universalize" their curriculum but have been caught in a fundamental conflict of purpose. Whilst the economy was expanding and sufficient jobs were available those disaffected by the system, including those labelled "failures" were squeezed out at the earlier year levels. This attracted relatively little public comment because these school leavers found jobs. Increasing economic constraints, however, and a growth of educational idealism through the 70s have sharpened the criticism. In splitting off the colleges in 1972 and concentrating their attention on pre-tertiary preparation and certification for the job-market, the ACT has shifted the expectation of secondary education "for all" back into the high schools but without the high schools greatly changing pre-70s curriculum and habits. As the Year 10 virtually corresponds with the final year of compulsory school attendance, the conflict of expectations is concentrated in the high schools. For the present, with the worsening job-market and the moves to encourage students to remain longer at schools, the problem will quickly move into the colleges. Economic circumstances are thus making nonsense of the notion of compulsory schooling. Because of lack of job opportunity many adolescents are or will be forced to stay at school until at least Year 10. The academic selection system which eliminates some proportion by Year 10 is increasingly inappropriate. Secondary education for all is given new meaning. As will be seen in a later analysis, the conflict in purpose shows up in a number of ways, including confusion over the Year 10 Certificate.

The confusion is exacerbated and complicated by other changes. Earlier maturation, for instance, has shifted certain questions of adolescent development back into Years 7-10. One principal psychologist in a state education system suggests that decisions once faced by 17-18 year olds, as for example on social values and sexual behaviour are now faced at a much younger age. There is increasingly critical concern about how schools can assist those adolescents who need help. As suggested earlier, social changes in Australian communities have touched us all, including students of high school age. If we are faced, as Lawrence and Bronfenbrenner suggest, with a "silent revolution" in the breaking down of family structure, the social alienation of which they speak, will begin or be confirmed during adolescence. It will be seen in later analysis that a major concern in high schools in the ACT and elsewhere is how to cope with adolescent social problems.

Our research demonstrates that a matter of considerable concern for students and teachers alike is adult-adolescent relationships, "them-and-us" as one student described it. Parents too, in expressing their anxiety about the effect of peer-group relationships may be confessing a sense of adult inadequacy in the face of adolescent development. ACT high schools are endeavouring to become even more supportive and to develop new strategies to assist students in their social and personal development. It is this effort that is in deepest conflict with the traditional role of the school in sorting, labelling and credentialling young people.

In Search of Models

Kemmis notes that the crisis in education "...has erupted as our aspirations for education have begun to face up to harsh economic realities. Part of the problem is that, until this crisis erupted, we have not had to examine our beliefs about education very closely. Now we have to, or else allow confusion to reign about where we believe education should be going."

There has always been a number of purposes running explicitly or implicitly through secondary education in Australia. The first is the "social control" purpose, perhaps the overriding purpose for schooling. Schools are institutions established to cultivate habits of obedience, punctuality and conformity in students. The second is the "academic" purpose which is to introduce students to the major academic disciplines and to prepare some of them for tertiary entrance. The third is the "individual development" purpose which suggests that schools should provide an environment in which students may discover and develop their individual powers and interests to become competent and fulfilled persons. Extended, this escalation of individuality is what we call "liberal education".

Martin (1981) draws a distinction between "traditional liberal" where schooling consists of a wide range of subjects calculated to "exercise the mind", and "modern liberal" based on the education of the "whole" person, involving not only the traditional forms of knowledge but also artistic, athletic, linguistic and mechanical skills, and vocational and attitudinal development.

The latter is probably the closest description of high school in the ACT and the rest of Australia.

A fourth purpose is the "industrial" or "job slots" purpose which is to train students in the skills required by the job-market. Together with the "academic" purpose, it requires high schools to act as selection and credentialling agencies and as a preliminary sorting device in a total system which eventually sorts people into high status business or professional courses, middle to high status technical and management jobs, trades, and low status jobs or unemployment frequently along sexist and ethnic lines.

The industrial purpose is well regarded, particularly by parents because it is what they experienced and it seems to offer a chance of social mobility through what seems to be fair competition. The "fairness" of the competition is under strong challenge in recent educational debate, particularly now that the endpoint for the losers is frequently protracted unemployment.

A fifth purpose is the "social reconstruction" purpose which sees schools as a means of enlightening students about their society, and enabling them to critically evaluate its structures and values, so that they may participate effectively as citizens in the processes of social change. It is, as Kemmis describes it, a view which values the individual as a member of society collaborating with others to make the society better for all.

> "It sees the school as a community and within a wider community, so it concerns itself with issues about how communities come into being, how they work, and why they decay.....It involves kids and teachers in participatory decision-making, it involves the community in curriculum decision-making, it negotiates the content and the conduct of teaching and learning, and it is committed to real, experience-based, collaborative learning about socially-useful matters."

However categorized, historically, as we have moved towards the ideal of secondary education for all we have accumulated a range of fundamentally differing purposes for high schools and we have now reached a point where the demands on schools need clarification. This is the crisis. We need to resolve the conflicting expectations and to clarify our purposes. In reaching these decisions, we need also to look at how such decisions may be arrived at, and who should be involved in making them.

The various purposes described above all have their support in Australian society, and consequently high schools have had to perform an extremely difficult balancing act to attempt to accommodate them all, particularly as some of the purposes inevitably are in conflict with the values and political assumptions of some people. Educational practice suffers accordingly. As one writer noted, this explains why the debate on purpose is so confused and so innately political, why high school curriculum is such a "hodge-podge", and why the curriculum is difficult to change.

Problems in Conflict of Purpose

If the problem of redirection of purpose is to be approached on the basis of competing claims it will be a question of whose voice is loudest or most powerful in the debate. This is likely to be socially and politically divisive.

There are a number of strong currents running at the moment in the debate about secondary schooling in ACT.

For instance, underlying controversy about whether a new secondary "grammar" school should be built is a fear on the part of those concerned with government schooling that private schools are capturing the market for serious academic secondary education.

Within the ACT high schools there is some retreat from the principles of comprehensiveness upon which ACT high schools have been founded, perhaps on the assumption that it is the academic curriculum which is the strength of the so-called private schools. This strategy has already been adopted by a number of high schools who explicitly and publicly advertise their curricula as "traditional academic". They compete with the private schools and some of their neighbouring systemic schools on the basis of their "autonomy", the right of parents to choose, and the assumption that this is what parents want. Thus one high school principal has stated to the Review Committee:

> "Programmes of ACT high schools are very similar in that most accent academic, physical and social development of students. Another similarity is the stress placed on English, Mathematics, Science, Social Science (History/Geography etc) and PE/Sport... Even the elective range is strikingly similar when closely investigated - crafts, foreign languages, Social Science being common offerings. Parents, through the school boards, are generally satisfied with the goals and curriculum as outlined. It is a structure that they understand and accept as giving a basic education with a reasonable elective range. The traditional goals and curriculum as outlined are what parents want and they are the people who determine where their children attend school."

Submissions to us do not allow us to confirm his confidence. In the absence of widespread participative debate on purpose the principal's assertion is a sweeping one. Evidence from research that we shall examine shortly disputes the generalization. Is it nevertheless possible to sustain the argument that a significant number of parents associated with ACT high schools want an academic education for their children and that it should therefore be a significant stream in high schools, or that there should be separate academic high schools? The Review Committee fears that this argument on purpose is in danger of becoming divisive within the ACT system.

We have seen in some schools unhealthy competition between ACT high schools, in a time of declining enrolments, where public espousal of differing purposes, as for instance, of "traditional" as against "open" high schools, is used in jockeying for advantage to gain enrolments, We have experienced cases, during our Review, of the traditional line being pursued in such a way as to publicly condemn alternative approaches at least by inference. We believe the argument on purposes for high schools is fragmented, confused and superficial, and that the Authority has a responsibility to ensure that the question of purpose is addressed responsibly, publicly and systemically. The present conflict of purpose is debilitating the high schools.

Towards a Resolution of Conflict of Purpose - Some Evidence

The Review Committee suggests that there is clear evidence of emerging public consensus on purposes for high schools in Australia and in the ACT. We draw upon recent state and national studies and on research commissioned for this Review to support this claim.

A number of research reports establishes the nature and extent of disaffection with secondary schools in Australia. Collins and Hughes, for instance, carried out a study of Expectations of Secondary Schools in 1978 for the Committee of Inquiry into Education and Training and Collins, Clark, Moran and Warhurst followed this in 1980 with a study called Looking Backward for the Schools Commission. This latter study revealed consistencies in the issues raised in two broad areas: "... first, complaints about the dominance of traditional academic subjects (and its converse, complaints about the neglect of other more relevant areas) and second, the bruising nature of the secondary schools as an environment for many adolescents." (Collins and Hughes, 1982)

The most significant comments from interviews that were part of the study came from 20 year olds who had recently completed some Year 12 pre-tertiary course of subjects which they described as "...alien to their experience and therefore meaningless. Useless was the usual and significant phrase." Collins and Hughes continue:

> "Even those who had successfully entered an academic tertiary institution rarely argued for the intrinsic merits of these subjects, only for their instrumental value as a ladder to success. (Respondents) ... were divided on whether these subjects were irrelevant or just taught poorly in ways which did not show their connection with real life. However, respondents often raised three other related matters and were unanimous in their condemnations. First, as one employer put it, the 'matric syndrome' distorted the total curriculum. Traditional matriculation subjects, such as science, mathematics, history, English literature, were seen in the school as important, mattering, while other subjects, no matter how valuable and significant, were ascribed a lower status.
>
> Second, and crucially, the focus of the school on academic success distorted the school's perception of those in its care. Students who were not trying for tertiary entrance or were not likely to do well at matriculation level felt that they were treated as lesser persons by the school: secondary schools tended to perceive students through the tunnel vision of academic prowess.

> This charge, a very serious one, was supported by the independent finding that, with few exceptions, only the academically successful had liked school, had come to know teachers, or had felt valued by them. Thirdly, we were told time and again that the choice of subjects available to students was too narrow to give most of them any sense of where their competencies and interest might lie. What was the point of years spent getting C's in subjects you were not good at?"

The findings on disaffection are replicated in state studies by Anderson and Steinle (1978) in South Australia and Queensland, who found that 37.2% of their South Australian school leavers sample were "very dissatisfied" or "moderately dissatisfied" with their schooling, whilst 23.4% in Queensland registered similarly. Similar disaffection was established by Meade in NSW (1981), Dynan in Western Australia (1980) and Wright and Headlam in Victoria (1976). The latter study was particularly concerned with early school leavers, the kind of people mentioned by students in Collins and Hughes as liable to be treated as "lesser persons" in a school focussing on academic success. Their anecdotal evidence confirms this. In a typical high school:

> "The minority were actively resentful, a majority conformed more or less passively while another minority were keen and gathered most of the rewards of high academic achievement." (Wright and Headlam, 1976)

The major issues identified in high schools were as follows:

* the irrelevance of much school experience; it was not seen as contributing to the important decisions of their lives;
* the desire for personal and not impersonal relationships: there was a strong desire to be recognized as persons by their teachers, a desire which was encouraged and fulfilled by some and apparently ignored by others;
* an over-emphasis on competition; many students had no experience at school which was not associated with failure;
* a desire for participation and responsible involvement;
* a concern for more effective and relevant vocational guidance.

It is a disturbing picture where school is an unpleasant experience for those who have most need of its help.

Wright and Headlam sum up the position for this group:

> "The early leavers experienced school at its worst on almost every measure of the quality of school life:
> . they left in the crowded early-middle secondary years when it was most impersonal;
> . pressures for achievement combined with apparent irrelevance produced restlessness, 'stirring', challenging of authority, and often authoritarian reactions from teachers;

- those leaving with Form IV or less were more aggravated by petty rules and regulations;
- only 35 per cent of them saw their teachers as 'enthusiastic' compared with 60 per cent who left at Form VI;
- a much higher percentage wanted more say for students while feeling hopeless about the likelihood of getting it;
- 70 per cent left with little or no idea of what they wanted to do, with only 11 per cent considering that they had adequate vocational guidance;
- streaming, and similar competitive processes underlined failure in the academic achievement so highly valued by schools, and provided a subtle and negative form of vocational guidance, so that some sort of a 'pushout' was occurring. In fact a considerable number of them reported that the school was glad to see them go." (Wright and Headlam,1976)

We turn now to the research conducted for the Review on student disaffection. The questions asked differed markedly from those addressed in the research referred to above, and many of the figures are buried in related and very specific questions on curriculum. Some of these appear in the following chapter. The Review research reports are published in full in companion volumes to this Report. Despite the differences, there is sufficient in the local studies to establish a general agreement with the state and national studies. For instance, one study captured the retrospective views of students who had left high school.

The research project comprised questionnaires and interviews with samples of students in Year 11 in colleges, in TAFE courses and with school leavers, and with half of the sample being in employment and the other half unemployed. The researchers summarize as follows:

> "Most of the school leavers went to high school because they had no choice. They saw the purpose of attending high school as marking time and getting a piece of paper which might help them get a job. These students were quite dissatisfied with the education provided. They saw high schools as geared to the needs of the college-going students, not them. They found much of the curriculum boring and irrelevant, and wanted greater emphasis on 'practical' subjects, life skills and job-related areas, things which they found more interesting and appropriate to their needs. The importance of subjects like English and Mathematics was recognized, though many felt that aspects of these subjects were quite unsuited to their needs (e.g. algebra, literary criticism). The disruptive behaviour of some students was considered to be a symptom of the problems with curriculum relevance and teaching methods. Students wanted to see a purpose in what they studied at school. Whilst students

found career education and work experience helpful when it was available, they had a number of criticisms of existing provisions. The two major problems were that career education came too late; it should have been available much earlier in high school; and that the TAFE area was barely discussed in their schools.

The college students were generally happier about the provision of practical subjects, although nearly a third were dissatisfied with such provision. Like the school leavers, these students favoured greater emphasis on subjects which would be useful in a job and about half of them also wanted to study subjects which would give them a greater understanding of aspects of society, such as consumer affairs, such as law and politics. They also agreed with the school leavers that there should be more emphasis on the world of work and career education, and more help in fitting into the society. In addition, they thought more emphasis should be placed on the development of self-confidence and self-awareness and academic work in preparation for further education. Most college students also thought that there should be more choice of learning activities within subjects.

The college students generally saw value in going to high school for more than just job qualifications. Many found that one of the most useful things they had learned was how to get on with other people. High school had also taught many students things useful for their leisure. It had not, however, helped most understand their rights and responsibilities as citizens or how to live independently, nor had it provided a good preparation for their future job or career, or for life in general.

The school leavers' views were similar, though more strongly expressed except that they saw high school more in vocational preparation terms. They felt that their high school experience had not been very helpful to them either in their current jobs or courses, nor in their lives beyond that. The helpful aspects were largely the social and personal benefits gained, such as learning to relate to people, and learning job-related courses or skills and courses in which they had special interests. Specific criticisms related to the students' current situations, but included the lack of responsibility they were given, the poor preparation for school leaving, the school's failure to prepare them for unemployment and the need for more living or survival skills".

The challenge in the evidence of disaffection is obvious. If we are serious about quality education for all students, and if we are to respond with changes in our schools, what consensus exists on the directions that these changes might take? Where is the debate on purpose for high schools heading? In their large scale study for the Committee of Inquiry into Education and Training, Collins and Hughes (1978) examined the views of teachers, parents and students of secondary school communities in New South Wales on five major orientations for secondary schools.

These correspond roughly to the five main purposes described earlier in this chapter, with some provision being made on the place of the "basics" of reading, arithmetic and oral skill, and on "fringe" items such as aesthetic, religious, outdoor education and sex education.

The meanings attached to the five orientations and the importance ratings of the total number of items is reproduced below:

* ACADEMIC ORIENTATION: It is the task of the secondary school school to introduce students to traditional academic subjects and to develop their competencies within them. Questionnaire items included understanding some principles of mathematical reasoning, understanding the basic ideas in a few sciences, appreciating some of the major works of English literature, etc.

* PRACTICAL ORIENTATION: It is the task of the secondary school to teach students immediately useful things they will need to know to find a job and to survive as an adult in our society. Questionnaire items included knowing the standard ways of writing business letters, understanding the routines and demands of the world of work, knowing about a wide range of possible jobs, etc.

* PERSONAL AUTONOMY ORIENTATION: It is the task of the secondary school to help each student develop in her/his own way. Questionnaire items included understanding the self, thinking clearly, finding information for oneself, developing independence of judgement, etc.

* SOCIAL AWARENESS ORIENTATION: It is the task of the secondary school to help students understand the world they now live in and the issues which they will have to face responsibly as adult members of society. Questionnaire items included understanding the structures of our society, developing a concern for justice, understanding environmental problems, etc.

* SOCIALIZATION ORIENTATION: It is the task of the school to produce citizens who fit into the Australian way of life. Questionnaire items included obedience, manners, conforming to majority views, perseverance, and punctuality.

The responses led to the following rankings in order of importance:

Students	Parents	Teachers
basics	basics	basics
practical	vocational/ personal autonomy	personal autonomy
personal autonomy/ social awareness	socialization/ social awareness	social awareness
socialization	general practical	socialization/ practical
academic/ fringe	academic/ fringe	academic/ fringe

These were perceptions of what schools ought to be concentrating on. Answers to a second question on discrepancy were an estimate by respondents of how well the school that he or she was associated with was doing in meeting these priorities.

These were listed in order of greatest to least discrepancy, which means that items at the top of the list indicate greatest dissatisfaction with the school's priorities and performance. Students' and parents' rankings were virtually identical.

Students' and Parents' Rankings

* practical
* personal autonomy
* social awareness
* socialization/fringe/basics
* academic

The above studies when considered together with the previous studies on disaffection cast serious doubt on both the legitimacy and effectiveness of a curriculum that is based on academic orientations. It is not what parents, teachers, students or other people want of schools, and in the opinion of even intending tertiary students who benefit most by succeeding in it, it is not a useful preparation for academic study.

The kind of shift in purpose suggested by the above study, and the growing support for such a shift within significant sections of the total community is confirmed by other studies, the largest and most sophisticated of which is the national study by Campbell and Robinson, What Australian Society Expects of its Schools, Teachers and Teaching (1979). It suggests clearly which areas of learning activity are regarded as important and deserving of emphasis by a consensus of teachers, students, parents, business persons and unionists. It yields the following list:

* Prepare children to cope with, and contribute to, life in society;
* Prepare children to work co-operatively with others in building their cultures and societies;
* Develop in each child a sense of personal worth and esteem;
* Schools should ensure that children know how to discover new knowledge;
* Schools should ensure that children know how to assemble facts, pose questions and arrive at tentative answers;
* Children should be motivated by teachers displaying warmth, supportiveness, and respect towards them;
* Learning should be fostered by children and teachers working together on significant problems.

Campbell and Robinson's conclusion was that there was consensus that secondary schools should be moving away from their "industrial" or "academic" purpose towards a combination of "humanistic, academic and social orientations" to become "humane learning communities". They report two other impressions. Firstly, although the "basics" of reading, writing, arithmetic and spelling are still judged to be very important, they are no longer in a "superior class" of their own

> "...it is joined by other knowledge which is more directly concerned with social processes and problems".

Secondly, although they differ on two important items to do with legitimacy of expectations, teachers were not markedly out of step with the other groups.

We now face a critical question in the current debate on educational purpose. If there is so much evidence accumulating of changing thinking on purpose for schooling, and of emerging consensus about the direction of this change, why does there seem to be so little shift from the status quo? As we have noted, a justification for the status quo amongst teachers and principals will be that the traditional curriculum is what parents want, and this has been suggested in some submissions including the submission of the high school principals. It is claimed that parents are making their wishes known through their choice of high school. We have seen that some principals make a virtue of

the traditional curriculum of their schools and claim to attract support as a consequence. The movement from government high schools to non-government schools is also cited as evidence, and the local pressure for an additional grammar school is given as an example of this general shift. This "evidence" seems to contradict the research described above, in which parents, teachers and students, placed a traditional "academic" orientation last in importance in this list of possible curriculum orientations. Is there an anomaly to do with the parents' attitudes here? The research evidence may reflect parents' considered views on what should be. "Voting with their feet" in the choice of schools may be an assumption that success for their child is still measured mainly in terms of marks in academic subjects that permit tertiary entrance. The traditional academic curriculum is locked in by a number of factors, including public appreciation of what educational pathways lead to social and economic power. Collins notes the seeming anomaly:

> "Although complaining to us about such a curriculum, parents clearly see it as part of the way the real world works and as necessary to "get on". While that is the way they see the real world, indeed, while it is the way the real world is, they are not likely to allow their children to be guinea pigs in an experimental junior secondary school program." (Collins 1982)

But not only are parents loath to shift. We suggest that teachers are caught in the same net but with the added anxiety of having the demand of parents thrust upon them to "succeed" with their children. As the research evidence of student attitudes in the ACT shows, even though they are relatively speaking the pawns in this social power game, and some of them at least complain about their learning diet at high school, they are realistic enough to give value and status to those subjects and to recognize that performance in the competitive academic game promises advantage. This conflict of what should be with social reality, is at the heart of the crisis in purpose in high schools. It is a dilemma in which we are all caught - parents, teachers and students.

If there are ways out of this dilemma, they will not be easy. We have agreed that the core of any strategy in setting basic purposes and directions for high schools in the ACT is to move the system further down the path of participation, particularly by encouraging parents to involve themselves more effectively and comprehensively in schools. The Schools Commission (1981) has suggested that it is only when parents enter into dialogue with teachers about their own child that it is possible for them to extend their concern into general social issues concerning other children. This is true for teachers and students as well. We

all carry our self-interest into debate, and it is, we suggest, only when the dialogue is sufficiently open for us to join the debate from this position that we begin to develop shared and more general concern that forms the basis for concerted action. The movement in the debate must therefore be conducted in such a way as to positively reflect legitimate self-interest.

In a recent article (Postman 1983) surveys educational change in the United States from the beginning of this century and he has also come to the conclusion that curriculum has advanced slowly and minimally. If teachers are expected to shift in their thinking and be innovative in content or methodology, they will only do so successfully if the change starts from their present teaching style and if it is seen to be a more effective way of teaching. The sort of partnership that we are advocating is one where the dialogue between parents, teachers and students is a shared learning experience. Not only students but teachers and parents need to experience a sense of increased power over the activities of schools. Working out the terms and conditions under which this may take place is the essence of planning for participation. The foregoing is so general and seemingly so obvious as to be regarded as trite. We are sure that it is not, and we will attempt to make some practical suggestions for increasing participation in a later chapter.

There are many points of entry into the debate on purpose in education systems. It is not only a question of how to mount the debate but also of deciding the key issues. Certainly these issues include the dilemmas, inconsistencies and confusions that are the result of conflicting purposes.

Co-operation or Competition?

It can be argued that the emphasis on the traditional academic curricula in ACT high schools is inconsistent with the principles on which the system was designed. If a school operates instrumentally as a socio-economic sorting device to label some students as failures and credential some as successes, this is inconsistent with ideals of equality of opportunity and the outcome of "intellectual growth" for all.

This is not an argument that there are no differentials in skills and abilities; it is an argument as picked up in the Schools Commission report on the 15-16 year old that schools can and do operate so as to create failure, and that they may do this whilst espousing quite different intentions and ideals. In such cases we need to examine our statements of principle, and purpose, and ensure that the statements are more than rhetoric masking a power game. The analysis of this kind of inconsistency in schools can be even more specific. A conflict which runs through approaches

to teaching and learning is whether it should be "competitive" or "co-operative". The former approach is part of the rationale for the traditional curriculum, and submissions to the Review which support the retention of the traditional curriculum voice the usual justifications for the competitive approach, including "survival of the fittest" and the notion that "... after all, the world outside school is competitive". Recent research shows that a co-operative approach in teaching and learning improves the performance of all but the brightest students, and in the case of the latter, makes no real difference. What it does do for all students is to improve their personal development and social relationships. Yet we continue to teach on competitive assumptions and as a key part of that teaching support a competitive assessment system which labels students as successes or failures, and at the same time subscribe to general principles of co-operation. Once again rhetoric masks reality.

Certification

The question of certification needs to be discussed in this context, and we refer to submissions we have received on the Year 10 Certificate in the ACT high schools. The argument seems to run that student motivation has declined because the Year 10 Certificate is not based on common, externally determined criteria and is therefore not valued by the students, parents, colleges or potential employers. The answer is to return to some external certificate. The New South Wales School Certificate is often quoted as having the desired attributes. This thinking shows a lack of awareness of what has been happening in other states, and particularly in NSW since the ACT system was established. The interstate curriculum consultants commented on this lack of awareness, and expressed regret that the Authority has not given schools and teachers more lead in looking outside of the ACT for new developments at the junior secondary level.

The McGowan Committee, a NSW Parliamentary Select Committee, set up to report on the School Certificate, found similar misconceptions within their state and made the following statement, using English as its example:

> "No matter where in NSW the subject English, for example, was being taught, it was the Board syllabus in English. Two changes in recent years are of importance here. The first is that Board syllabuses themselves have, since the mid-seventies, allowed teachers so much freedom of interpretation that the English courses offered in two schools can be quite different. There are no longer any prescribed texts; there is no longer any specified grammar. Some schools still offer English courses that resemble closely those that used to be taught in the fifties and sixties; others offer courses which present English more as a dynamic form of immediate communication than as a disciplined form of study. Schools which have accepted the new freedom are more likely to offer students opportunities to gain experience in the modern communications media, or in the specialized language of sub-culture groups including advertisers and propagandists than to require them to pursue stylised studies of classic works of literature. Similar freedoms exist in most current Board syllabuses." (McGowan 1981)

The McGowan Committee in its recommendations favoured the abolition of the School Certificate and its replacement by a "Certificate of Secondary Education" issued to all students who left school at any stage after the age of compulsory schooling. Such a certificate, similar to the document issued in South Australia, we consider to be worth consideration in the ACT and we will examine the proposal in a later chapter.

The McGowan Report made further recommendations which would move New South Wales further in the direction that has been taken in the ACT, with internal assessment, school based curriculum development with central course approval and students able to select courses each semester. Newspaper reports indicate the likelihood of these recommendations being adopted.

We find comments which the McGowan Committee made on the concept of pass and fail to be very illuminating in the discussion regarding standards and rigour:

> "We have no argument with the motives of the Secondary Schools Board in abolishing that particular concept of "failure" which used to mark large-scale, public examinations for it was both misleading and too severe. It was misleading because it allowed the community to

> believe that students who failed were incompetent and those who passed were competent. (The pass mark, in fact, was set quite arbitrarily. It was set so that a pre-determined proportion of the candidature would pass. It took no account of whether students' work was satisfactory.) It was too severe because it was a permanent judgment that placed a blanket value on the whole of the student's school life. ... Failure should carry sanctions but they should be neither permanent nor devastating. As far as possible, failure should mean "has not demonstrated the achievement called for" rather than "has not beaten enough of the class". Further, it should mean "has not yet demonstrated the necessary achievement" rather than "is incapable of ever demonstrating the necessary achievement". Failure should not be reported on public certificates of achievement, but success should be." (McGowan 1981)

The McGowan Committee has demonstrated its belief that education should aim at nurturing and developing the capacities of all students, rather than sorting them irrevocably into categories as has been done in the past through the industrial tradition of education.

We applaud this belief and in a later section we shall look more closely at its implications for curriculum and assessment.

Schools as Knowledge Factories or Caring Institutions

We have noted the way in which high schools are acquiring increased responsibility for various aspects of socialization of adolescents which were previously the concern of other social institutions, including the family. This is causing burdens to be placed upon teachers who are expected to accept these responsibilities in addition to teaching, and without any proper training or resources. We note in submissions expressions of concern about relationships between teachers and students, and about discipline, which is now for teachers much more than a matter of class and institutional control of students. We suggest that, just as dilemmas of the kind addressed above could be better approached with greater application of honesty and consistency, so this seeming conflict between the teaching and caring responsibilities of schools may be resolved by following more consistently the intentions expressed in the seminal documents of the ACT system. The high schools curricula, for instance, could be uncoupled from the college curricula and treated as a form of general education and non-specific preparation for future work, and induction into adult life. If high school curricula are seen as more than packages of knowledge of the kind to be pre-requisites for college curriculum, and if they are to include relationships in classrooms and in the school, and if these issues are able to be treated in study and

open discussion, then concern for students is more likely to become an integral part of the work of teachers. In the uncoupling process questions have to be asked about what is to be taught. It is not just that the subjects in high school ought not to be pre-requisites of material taught in colleges but that high schools might consider subjects not hitherto taught. If induction is a central purpose, for instance, does it require analysis of current political structures and processes? Should preventive health become a core subject? The Campbell Report suggested that high school curriculum should be problem-centred, without identifying the problems. This will be pursued in a later chapter.

Powerful Knowledge

Associated with the concept of problem-centred curriculum is the notion of "powerful knowledge", which is that knowledge which gives power to students over their own lives. Collins suggests that it is a compass to chart a way in choosing what to teach.

> "There are at least three ways in which knowledge can be powerful. First, it can be instrumentally powerful, that is, it can have value as cultural capital often as a certificate which unlocks societal doors. Second, it can be powerful in increasing one's understanding of reality, personal, social and material. Third, it can be powerful in helping one to act - helping one to relate to, to influence, to take part in aspects of reality." (Collins 1982)

To change the traditional academic curriculum may not require changing subjects in favour of general studies. Such a change does require the avoidance of trivialities in subjects taught, and it may require teachers of subjects to collaborate in integrated problem-solving activities, to show the connections between subjects and how different disciplines bring particular understandings to problems.

The "Lists" Approach to Purpose:
Statements of Aims and Objectives in High Schools

It is important that debate on purpose in high schools be honest and realistic.

One of the practices in education which is increasingly discredited is the practice of writing statements of general aims and objectives. A glance at many curriculum documents, at school or system level will reveal a list of platitudinous statements about desirable skills, abilities, personal qualities, attitudes and values that schools set out to inculcate in their students. There is usually nothing wrong with the statements as such, they

are characteristically unexceptionable, entirely desirable ends. Too often, however, they are at such a level of generality that they are difficult to translate into decisions and programs. If there are discernibly large differences between aims and programs, they invite charges of insincerity and exaggeration, and can breed cynicism. Campbell and Robinson, in their national study of expectations of schools, referred to earlier, established a consensus on what kinds of aims people usually hold for schools. Thus:

Primary Function of Schools

* prepare children to cope with, and contribute to, life in society;
* prepare children to work co-operatively with others in building their cultures and societies;
* develop in each child a sense of personal worth and esteem;
* prepare children to continue learning when school days are over;
* help children to cope with their present life experiences.

Knowledge Which Schools Should Primarily Develop

* the established basics of reading, writing, arithmetic and spelling;
* how to assemble facts, pose questions and arrive at tentative answers;
* how to discover new knowledge;
* that all people have worth and value, by virtue of being human;
* the changes that are occurring in Australian society.

Prime Responsibility Relating to Values

* provide children with the opportunity to discuss value issues at the appropriate level, and to develop tolerance of diverse values;
* ensure that children develop values of respect for authority, hard-work, restraint, and preparation for the future.

* clarify, by rational means, the variety of values that exist within society;
* prepare children for making choices about their values and their life styles, without attempting to inculcate any particular ones.

We suggest that what is important is the process by which school communities establish these directions. It should be participative so that it establishes consensus on purposes, it should produce a statement that is open to further consideration, and it should provide an agreed frame of reference for consideration of each school's program. We have also suggested

that a useful starting point to capture concern and commitment is to take up the issues of schools as caring institutions. How parents, teachers and students relate to one another can be explored as a question in which all contributions to discussion will be based on the experiences of each group participating as equal partners. Most competent teachers pride themselves justifiably, on their attempts to develop systems of discipline based on reason rather than force. To debate principles and practical procedures consistent with these aims is a valuable shared exercise between teachers, students and parents. We note from some submissions that the Glasser approach to discipline is being tried in some ACT high schools. Is it an experiment shared by teachers, parents and students?

Another way of making statements of aims and objectives real is to include current critical social and moral issues which require decisions from schools. Such issues are a point of entry into questions on the general directions that schools need to take as they affect implicitly or explicitly what schools do, in the way they operate and in content that they offer.

Examples of such issues would be:

* Youth Unemployment

  This is structural and will increase and persist. In Canberra it is already in excess of 30%. Unemployed youth without alternative activity depreciate as people. This is creating a social scrap-heap. There is a depth of anxiety in students of ACT high schools about their futures. As we noted earlier the problem pressures parents to support the competitive scramble for the fewer jobs. This is a selfish and ultimately socially destructive response. The key question was posed by a parent at a recent high school seminar on curriculum: "How can schools assist all of our young people to find gainful activity?"

* Rapid Technological and Social Change

  This relates to youth unemployment. But there are other consequences of rapid change in technology (as for instance in communications systems) which are affecting the whole gamut of social organizations. Schools are themselves staggering under the impact of this change. How can schools prepare students to cope with change, and how can schools adjust their mode of operation to be more responsive to change?

* Competition

For sound, arguable educational reasons some ACT high schools already advocate non-competitive assessment in Years 7-10. Some parents and employers, partly in response to the kind of anxiety noted above, are pressing for a return to competitive assessment. Schools on the other hand face the problem that if they are concerned with the intellectual and social development of all children, it is difficult to support a system of assessment based upon competitive ranking, and notions of pass-fail, and of labelling some students as successful at the expense of others who are labelled as failures.

This dilemma will not be understood and resolved unless it is thoroughly debated by all interested parties.

* Sexuality

Attitudes to sexuality have changed so fundamentally in recent decades that some parents lack the capacity to advise and assist our young people to formulate attitudes and values that will make their developing sexuality a happy part of their lives. In the absence of advice and assistance students are left with peer misinformation and irresponsible and often cynical media pressure. Schools need to address these issues effectively through close and frank consultation with parents, teachers and informed advisers. Certainly such a sensitive and complex issue can only be tackled through careful collaboration of parents and teachers.

* Multiculturalism

Canberra reflects the ethnic mix of other large centres. Australia now has a great variety of ethnic groups. A recent count of ethnic languages spoken in Australia identified more than 90, not counting numerous Aboriginal languages. Recent debate on immigration and citizenship remind us that the recognition and positive acceptance of our multicultural or poly-ethnic population is essential to social stability. The ACT Schools Authority has issued a policy statement on multicultural education. Has it been debated adequately in the high schools?

To gather a group of teachers and parents together and attempt to define the social futures which face our children would be to add to the list. There are conference techniques which develop planning and set directions on the basis of the findings.

The Review Committee was asked to examine the appropriateness of the aims and outcomes of high schools in the ACT. Our emphasis in this chapter on the need for a participative approach on such questions is not our way of dodging the issue. To be consistent with our major theme we cannot make definitive statements. Our conclusion on this part of the brief is clearly that purpose for high schools will have to be redefined. We do not expect, or suggest a sudden or dramatic shift.

Any change is not simply brought about. Community feelings about high schools run very deep indeed. The recent furore in the ACT over such a minor thing as the proposed change of name of Telopea Park High School reinforces the need for effective discussion and negotiation if major reforms are to be brought about. We have, for example, been made aware of considerable misgivings among the public and among teachers on the question of moving to a middle school model. The major change to the high school/college system is too recent, in many people's minds, for a further change to be made.

In addition, the very mobile nature of Canberra's population places a further constraint on change. People who are subject to interstate posting are naturally apprehensive about an education system which appears to be different from those of the rest of the country.

We clearly indicate our concern that high schools continue their efforts to become places which make the welfare of students paramount.

Traditionally, the major part in moral, ethical and attitudinal development has been taken by the home, by churches and by youth organizations. It is clear, however, from research, from our own observation, and from discussion with teachers and parents that these agencies are no longer the strong influences that they once were and that the school is the only institution which has access to all children. If schools can develop a co-operative relationship amongst young people, and between adults and young people, dealing understandingly with matters which are agreed upon as being of value to students then much will have been achieved. Such an effect may flow ultimately into relationships outside of the schools.

The development of improved relationships within schools would not require major changes in system or school goals. What is required is a determination on the part of teachers and the community to put the agreed goals into practice, and a realization that these goals cannot be achieved by simply talking to students nor by unco-ordinated additions to an already overloaded and fragmented curriculum. If young people are to act responsibly they must have the opportunity to practise responsibility; if they are to accept people with trust and respect they must be trusted and respected.

In order to incorporate such learnings into the fabric of the curriculum, without seriously affecting the traditional offering which so many people see as valuable, there must be a full participative examination of aims and, simultaneously, of the process by which those aims can be incorporated into the subjects offered and into the attitudes and organization of the schools. Too often in the past goal setting has been a tokenistic exercise which was ignored when lesson time arrived.

It seems to us inappropriate that such a far-reaching examination should be left to individual schools to carry out as and when they see the need. It would certainly have to be carried out within each school community but in a way which ensured that it was seen as having the support and encouragement of the Authority. There would be a need for a process of public sensitization to the issues in order that the whole school community might be motivated to take part. The process itself would be the major developmental force rather than the handing down of a set of goals at the end. Nor should such a process be seen as a "once-off" exercise.

This type of development and negotiation must be a continuing process so that succeeding groups of teachers, parents and students can be made aware, and so that the goals and curriculum can be modified to meet changing conditions, rather than being allowed to rigidify as has happened in the past.

Summary

The doctrine of secondary education for all and the effect of the economic situation on retention rates has changed the reason for many young people's school attendance, but students are still being given the sort of schooling which was provided when high schools had narrow function in preparation for tertiary entrance and vocational sorting. Earlier maturation, leading to an earlier onset of adolescence, has forced schools to move more into the area of personal and social relationships and to develop a more caring role. This development is in conflict with the traditional role referred to above. Research studies have identified a number of different understandings of the purposes of high schools. These perceptions are all striving for recognition, but schools have difficulty in coping with the conflicting demands. Although the research indicates a fairly clear consensus among students, teachers, parents and the wider community that the traditional academic orientation is held to be less important than preparation for "whole-of-life" in society, there is a perception among parents and teachers that rigorous academic study is necessary in order for children to succeed in employment and further study. The Committee regards rigour in learning as being very important but it argues that rigour and high standards are not dependant on a traditional curriculum. Rigour can and should, permeate all study.

Success in tertiary study does not depend upon narrow specialization in early adolescence. This does not imply the abandonment of traditional disciplines. The concept of "powerful knowledge" which is gaining currency suggests that we need to remove trivia from the content of subjects and to ensure that the knowledge that students gain will help to give them power over their own lives. Of equal concern is the development of attitudes and the ability to live in harmony with others, both on a personal and societal level.

There is a need for all parties to debate the purposes and practices of secondary education, taking as a starting point the nature of the society in which teenagers now find themselves, and into which they will move as adults.

We believe that all sections of schools should renegotiate their goals and practices, in a fully collaborative way, bearing in mind the nature of society, the impact of technology and the developmental level of present high school students. The ACT Schools Authority should be seen as supporting and encouraging this negotiation, and should ensure that there is public sensitization to the issues.

We now turn to a closer and more detailed critique of present curriculum practices in high schools in the ACT.

Thus far we have approached our task by making a series of very general comments about the performance of the ACT Schools Authority and the high schools that are part of it.

We now turn our attention to the schools in action and to the teaching and learning that goes on in classrooms. To do this we have drawn upon submissions, discussions with students, teachers, parents and interested bodies, research and our own visits to schools.

In our brief historical description of the ACT education system in Chapter 1 we suggested that the curriculum pattern in high schools had not realized the hopes of the Campbell Committee but had in fact continued to follow the Wyndham pattern, albeit with considerable freeing up of student choice and subject availability, along with honest and often effective attempts to develop a more sensitive and caring approach to students.

The evidence we have gathered during the course of the Review, however, suggests that much of the curriculum development that has gone on consisted of rearrangement of traditional elements rather than of radical re-thinking, and that as a result the curriculum still does not meet the needs of a considerable proportion of students. We have said elsewhere, and say again now, that standards of teaching, care and student achievement are as high in Canberra as anywhere in Australia; the point we are making throughout the Report is that the basic issues of junior high school education have not been widely addressed in Canberra any more than in the rest of Australia. As indicated in Chapter 5, this Review fortuitously occurs just when the debate on these issues is moving into the public arena, and when there appears to be a growing mood for change. We believe that the ACT is in an excellent position to be again a lighthouse for educational development in Australia.

Criticisms of Current Curriculum

The major criticism that is raised is in the area of content. In conversations with students, in submissions from organizations and individuals, and in our research findings there is repeated reference to dissatisfactions with the present offering.

A number of research studies of ACT high schools were commissioned for this Review, and are published in full in companion volumes. In brief, the findings of the surveys of students in Year 10 indicate the following:

* students want more emphasis on development of self-confidence, self-awareness, plus skills, knowledge and techniques for a future job;

* the two areas of greatest concern to students are deciding what kind of job they want in future and reaching satisfacory standards in core subjects;

* students want more help with deciding what kind of job they want in future, knowing how to get a job, how to study efficiently, and how to cope in everyday life;

* a substantial number of the students feel that teachers do not give them work matched to their abilities. This may be in terms of work that is too difficult, or not difficult enough;

* half the students do not get a chance to put what they learn into practice or evaluate the information they are given;

* the majority of students enjoy learning and believe what they learn is both important and satisfying. (30-40% disagree and state that content is not useful or worthwhile);

* 50-55% say they find that the things they study are relevant to their interests (45-50% disagree saying that the curriculum is irrelevant);

* 25% do not think that the work they do is a good preparation for their future;

* only 30% of students think that an educational experience is provided which is intellectually stimulating and satisfying;

* half the students are satisfied with the range of courses available to them, but half are not; they would like the opportunity to learn more practical job-related subjects and more about the outside world;

* on average, students believe that great emphasis has been placed on the 3 R's and moderate emphasis on preparation for further education and work; they report that least emphasis has been placed on developing self-awareness and self-confidence and knowing how to make a worthwhile contribution to the community.

What sort of choice is available for students?

* The only subjects which a large majority of students think should be compulsory are English, Science and Mathematics.

* Half the students are satisfied with the range of courses available to them, but half are not - they would like the opportunity to learn more practical job-related subjects and more about the outside world.

* Most students have at least some difficulty choosing which electives to study, but most make their decision entirely by themselves or with parental help. Nearly half the students would like more guidance about course choices and careers.

Clearly these results are somewhat reassuring as they indicate considerable satisfaction on the part of the majority of students. We cannot, however, ignore the opinions of the minority.

We refer, particularly, to the group of students who say that "they would like the opportunity to learn more practical job-related subjects and more about the outside world". We have spoken to such students on school visits and their counterparts figure prominently in such studies as Meade (1981), Collins (1980) and Dynan (1980). These students often have difficulty articulating their precise feelings but it becomes clear that they have a deep-felt need. A few students quoted by Dynan are typical:

> "... teach you a trade"
> "... having more important subjects instead of subjects that are no need for you when you're grown up"
> "... more practical experience with matters that concern society in everyday life"

Collins (1980) conducted a national survey of post-secondary young people including some who were employed, unemployed, attending schools, and the adults who work with them. It was found that even though the respondents were more articulate than the secondary students quoted above, the same comments were made: curricula are too dominated by academic, tertiary oriented subjects which were in many cases taught far too narrowly, non-academic subjects are held in low esteem by schools, and student choice is too circumscribed by organizational arrangements. Studies of job-oriented skills such as job application, grooming, interview techniques, vocational skills and life-oriented topics such as drugs, sex, budgeting, form-filling were fairly generally seen as important. Lest it be assumed that this information is coming only from young people whose judgement might be immature it should be made clear that Collins gained similar perceptions from employers, youth workers and academic staff.

What of the adults associated with the ACT system? Some clue as to priorities in curriculum is provided by teachers' responses on their staff development needs and on questions of teacher satisfaction.

The three general areas seen as 'of major importance' by most classroom teachers for their effectiveness were:

* planning and teaching lessons which cater appropriately for students of all ability levels, but especially for students with particular learning difficulties;

*. knowledge of one's teaching subject, including keeping up-to-date, and understanding its relevance to areas of life and work;

* Interpersonal skills, both in working with one's colleagues and in one's dealings with students and others: in the case of students, skills in assisting their social development and helping them with problems.

A considerable number of teachers are feeling a need for assistance in:

* catering in the classroom for the individual needs of students of all abilities, but especially those with particular learning difficulties, special talents and, to a lesser extent, those from non-English speaking backgrounds;

* helping students' general development; both their social and personal development and specific counselling relating to their school progress and program and future job.

In the teacher satisfaction survey most of the items scoring highly to indicate satisfaction were to do with conditions of service (hours, leave, holidays) or professional relationships, the curriculum issues in the top scores showing the high value placed by teachers on freedom to select teaching methods, determine methods of student assessment, and to determine curriculum generally. Case studies of three high schools revealed different preoccupations in curriculum content. One high school for instance was concentrating on adding career education and work experience to its program, establishing an "off-line" group as a mini-school for students at risk and a "learning centre" for mildly intellectually handicapped students, and changes in the Industrial Arts area including a pre-apprenticeship course in Technical Drawing. A second school was attempting to mainstream rather than simply add on important new content such as Health Education, and to make the curriculum more relevant for specific groups of students and providing opportunities for these students with diverse talents and interests to become involved in areas such as Music, Drama and Craftwork. In this school even though the changes occurred without touching fundamental curriculum structures by preserving the subject departments, some teachers noted that as the school addressed questions of providing more relevant curriculum content, like Health, there were positive effects on teacher-student relationships. "This occurred where the curriculum began to address issues which the students found important and where their questioning during class indicated their interest. This opened up communication between students and teacher and was sometimes carried on outside class time." In a third school a protracted struggle was reported over attempts to introduce changes to a highly traditional curriculum. What this says about how decisions on curriculum are made within schools will be examined in a later chapter.

If teacher perceptions of curriculum were to be judged by the surveys and the case studies above, we would have to conclude that high school teachers in the ACT do not see possibilities

very far beyond the traditional curriculum inherited from the past. We will shortly examine critical comments of a group of interstate consultants on the way most schools are locked into traditional patterns of academic subjects, particularly by the emphasis in school organization on subject departments. If teachers are asked questions on satisfaction, and questions on matters of immediate concern, it would be expected that their responses would reflect and suggest support for the status quo. However, there are signs of undercurrents of concern and dissatisfaction - concern, for instance, with student-teacher relationships, with arrangements that might work to make schools more responsive to the needs of students, and with new approaches to subject content. A system-wide study of a sample of teachers with special responsibilities for curriculum, however, crystallized some of these concerns. Results show that the five most important issues in curriculum were:

1. How to meet the needs of every student - through providing a wide range of choices appropriate to them, within the limits of available staffing and in response to student demand.

2. How to provide a school environment and curriculum which will develop every student's sense of personal worth, self-understanding and self-direction and ensure success of some sort for all students; the extent to which this is possible with current high school curricula and competitive assessment procedures.

3. The development throughout the curriculum of teaching which will encourage independent thinking and problem-solving skills; teaching students how to seek out, interpret and evaluate information from various sources within and beyond the school.

4. The compartentalisation and fragmentation of the high school curriculum and the tendency to keep adding bits on, rather than evaluating its overall structure and purpose.

5. Relating the entire curriculum to aspects of living in the everyday world - but especially ensuring that before they leave school all students have the opportunity to learn, for example, about the law and their legal rights and obligations, consumer rights, finances, the political process and skills of self-sufficiency and survival, such as cooking, gardening; whether at present topics considered of significance in the "real world" are added on to the curriculum in a way dissociated from the traditional subjects.

It is less easy to gain an accurate assessment of parental views on curriculum content. A general perception among teachers approximates to that expressed by a principal which we have

quoted in Chapter 5. A research project conducted in connection with this Review involved a sample of parents who were facing the choice of secondary school for the first time. This research showed that parents have little direct knowledge of secondary schools, even though they are very concerned about the choice that they have to make.

The high school years, the research shows, are important and are years of some anxiety while children grow beyond their parents' easy influence. For instance 40% were worried about peer group pressures, 40% were concerned about their child maintaining a good work orientation, while 42% mentioned misgivings about some aspect of the school's contribution to their child's education. The social aspect of the school mattered as often as did the intellectual - as the researchers emphasise, "... the high level of concern about the school as a social environment needs careful noting and its implications must be thought through." They have views about what teaching/learning situation is good for their child, what kind of discipline is needed in a school, and what indicates a good and bad school. The researchers comment that "... in many respects parents wanted schools which, in aims and methods, were an idealized version of the schooling they had experienced." They find it difficult to view schools from a completely fresh perspective, and were concerned about job futures and competitive social pressures. And yet their thinking is not entirely traditional - they support the ACT trust towards parent involvement. "The parents believed that in a good school parents participated properly and fully in decisions and spoke regularly with teachers about their child's learning." Other concerns and thinking of parents about discipline of a caring kind, for peer group influence, for schools to teach important social values (respect for others, caring, a sense of responsibility, self-discipline,) are described in the research report. A last somewhat surprising result to note was that very few parents had clear views on curriculum content. Very few wanted particular content: high schools were simply there and it did not occur to them to discuss curriculum, beyond vague concern about standards. Almost no-one suggested that their concerns on discipline and irrelevant curriculum content might be linked.

Another perception of parent views is obtained from the submission on the ACT Council of P & C Associations. This group of parents who are highly experienced in school and system involvement are able to articulate their concerns in a way that is congruent which much of what we have already seen.

> "The social pressures on schools to perform a range of functions are enormous. The school is expected to impart a body of knowledge, to develop intellectual and manipulative skills; to develop aesthetic, moral and social sensibilities; to teach children to care for the environment; to cope with leisure, sexuality, the media, motor cars and drugs.

> Nevertheless, schools often respond in an unimaginative way by "adding-on" elements to the curriculum rather than by transforming the school environment in ways which capitalize upon the capacity of students to learn from each other and to develop qualities of responsibility, co-operation and independence."

The Study By Interstate Subject Consultants

In an endeavour to find out the actual state of curriculum in ACT schools, rather than to rely completely on literature and research findings, members of the Review Committee visited all high schools in the ACT together with a variety of secondary colleges, primary schools and the School Without Walls. This presented us with opportunities to see at first hand the work of the schools.

On these visits we spoke to as many teachers, administrators, parents and students as time would allow. We recognized, however, that informal discussions of this kind were no basis upon which to make generalizations about the schools, particularly about curriculum content and teaching methods. Only one of us has worked in the ACT system, and by varying amounts it has been a considerable time since most of us have had any close contact with work in classrooms. Accordingly, with the agreement of the schools and the Authority, we invited a group of eleven subject specialists from three neighbouring States to visit high schools over a fortnight and address these issues directly with teachers, subject department heads, assistant principals and principals. They were able to discuss the work in their subject speciality with whomever they wished, examine documents, and observe students at work.

Each of the eleven consultants spent either a day or two days in four separate schools. According to their brief, their task was three-fold: to check on content and teaching methods in their subject, and to examine how decisions were made on content and teaching method and on the place of their subject within the total curriculum of the schools. Also by agreement, they gave an immediate verbal report to each school at the end of their visit, and as well prepared a written report for the Review Committee which, without any references being made to individual schools by name or in any other way, and with due regard to the small sample, attempted some generalizations about the quality of teaching in their subject speciality in ACT high schools. Their general impressions were discussed briefly with ACT subject consultants and at length with the Review Committee. The similarity of the comments made on the eleven different subjects, and between general impressions of the total curriculum gained by the interstate consultants when compared with those gained by the Review Committee as a result of their visits to schools, was striking.

The consultants confirmed our general impression, already reported in this document, that the standards of teaching and student achievement are as good as anywhere in Australia. They also confirmed that the problems in high schools being experienced in ACT are generally the same problems as are being experienced in the States from which they came. For instance, the three States are at different stages in the same debate about who should make decisions in curriculum, and about what forms of support are required for teachers in a devolved system. They suggested however, that high school curriculum in the ACT is in a state of hiatus: the debate is not going forward effectively and problems are accumulating. Comparisons may be invidious, but they felt that the ACT high schools had been by-passed by their own systems in curriculum development, and in a system that is in many other respects so innovative, this came as a genuine surprise to many of them. Their complete reports are published in a later volume. They include many references to the strengths of the high schools and to exceptional practices which they were quick to commend. They also stress that in each case their comments are based on a sample of four schools only. The brief extracts given below indicate the consistency of their perceptions.

Curriculum Content

Terms used for all the subjects studied include "traditional", "conservative", "bland", "academic" (generally meaning "too theoretical"), and lacking (with significant exceptions) "innovation". Thus English is "... generally safe, conservative and indeed solid" but with peripheral change only. "There is scope for an unlocking of the traditional modes of English teaching in the 7-10 high school system - few schools are taking advantage of the freedom to change and build curricula more appropriate to the needs of today's children."

In Mathematics, "... the teaching has not changed markedly from that which existed when the schools were part of the NSW system." The Science curriculum "... in most schools was academically oriented, conservative and traditional, whilst there is considerable variety in its organization, there is little evidence of innovation and liberalization of its content." In languages "... there appears to be little other than the traditional language course aiming at a fairly highly developed range of skills achieved by very few students and likely to perpetuate an essentially elitist approach to language learning."

Social Science ".. in most schools is a hotch-potch of disparate parts, left over from pre-Authority days - an educational historian's dream, but hardly appropriate for providing programs which adequately meet the needs of students facing a rapidly changing society." The content is "outdated" and "inappropriate", "non-integrated" and "extremely traditional". The Home Economics consultant commented on the dichotomy drawn "... between what was thought to be academic and non-academic

subjects... which produced an over-emphasis on the academic curriculum accompanied by a simplistic and muddled view of the non-academic curriculum. And ... since academic appeared to be equated with written work ('theory') the important role of practical experience in conceptualization was ignored." In Industrial Arts "... the content is conservative. While there are numerous exciting developments in the structure of Industrial Arts courses and there is much commendable teaching occurring, there is the impression that in regard to most areas of content and method the schools present as a well-preserved time-capsule of New South Wales content and method, circa 1970's."

In Art "... it was somewhat disappointing to find an absence of significantly innovative programs. However, it must be recognized that the overall climate of the school system has not been conducive to the development of innovative Art programs." In Music the problem is not so much with content but in developing a stronger place for the subject and extending the variety of Music experiences. Physical Education "... lacks real initiative and flair" and will need to adjust to changes which will follow from the recent wide acceptance of Daily Physical Education in primary schools. In History "... of the four departments two could be regarded as progressive, one was a tidy blend of the traditional and innovative and the other, while fairly traditional, was still attractive to students."

Teaching Methods

The comments on method overlap those on content. Both content and method, as the consultants noted throughout their reports, are at least partly determined by structural arrangements, particularly the strength of the subject departments, and the climate of the school, including the encouragement or discouragement of innovation. Thus in Social Science, content and method are affected by the continuing domination of History and Geography: "ACT high school programs in the main are non-integrated and extremely traditional. They are basically a separate History taught narrowly and chronologically and/or a separate Geography taught again in a narrow traditional way ... more seriously perhaps, the teaching strategies adopted are largely expository in nature concentrating on the transfer of knowledge but doing little for the student's ability to think critically or solve problems."

Mathematics teaching "... in every case consisted of a teacher in front of a class seated in rows of tables with a teacher explaining an example exercise followed by student work on similar exercises - talk and chalk, teacher exposition methodology. This was true regardless of the school architecture. School statements regarding a variety of teaching styles were not substantiated by the practice observed, and not only in Mathematics. In the classrooms that I visited or observed while walking about the schools, the teaching

methodology was reasonably consistent with that observed for Mathematics. The only variation was in the quality of teaching which ranged from excellent traditional teaching to totally inadequate." Further "... the main instrument in the Mathematics teaching process was the text book, usually of NSW origin. Only one school showed much evidence of teachers selecting material from a variety of sources to present to students. The majority of teachers observed teach Mathematics not students." The English consultant comments that innovative approaches to teaching can be found in all schools, but "... these appear to be peripheral changes rather than changes which might affect the entire English program. Mostly they are changes initiated by an individual teacher with some slight chance that the change might be picked up by someone else on the staff. Change and innovation tends therefore to be individualised rather than part of a whole staff process in which English teaching can be reformulated and considered ... individual strengths of teachers are for the most part untapped: untapped primarily because English faculties (with exceptions) show little evidence of a corporate or collective purpose and policy for the development and implementation and ongoing review of curriculum."

The Home Economics consultant considered that "... most assignments and classwork seen were teacher directed, concentrating on imparting information to students. Testing was also information based." This same anomaly in practical subjects was echoed by the Industrial Arts consultant. "The teaching strategies are very traditional. The areas of woodwork and metal work are dominated by a teacher-centred skills orientation while technical drawing is characterised by significant amounts of lock-step tuition. There is no memorable use in program or practice of small group techniques, problem solving, design strategies, work station simulation or industrial visits." In History "... there is a distinct risk of teaching styles becoming sterotyped ... and there is a need for a continuing research for assessment devices that are appropriate to the subject." Other consultants commented on the effect of assessment on teaching method. In Social Science, for instance, "... there appears to be an inordinate emphasis on assessment at all year levels throughout most high schools, particularly assessment which grades performance. This in turn appears to be a major factor in determining the curriculum and in particular the teaching strategies adopted." In Science: "Students are subjected to continuous testing, which in some schools is excessive."

Non-adaptive Curriculum

The unanimous concern of the interstate subject consultants and the members of the Review Committee about the traditional nature of the high school curriculum must be noted. It is not an attack on the quality or integrity of teachers. It is a precise realization in the Canberra setting of the general concern expressed in the research and critique on high school curriculum

which is behind the claim that high schools everywhere are in a crisis of purpose. Schools in the ACT, as elsewhere, have adopted the practice of simply adding on to the traditional curriculum rather than making progressive and fundamental changes.

The ACT Council of P & C Associations has properly criticized this approach on the basis that such palliatives do not come to grips with the inflexibility and unresponsiveness of the traditional curriculum. The submission of the Working Party on Sexism also refers to this approach and notes:

"The curriculum cannot increasingly be divided into more and more little boxes." As new demands are placed on high schools, additional material is treated as if it can be "boxed" like the traditional disciplines. Thus "health", "transition", "drama", "careers", "work experience" and even "sexism" and "multiculcuralism" are treated as separate, discrete activities. If the argument is mounted that any of these additions would be better integrated into existing disciplines, unless the material can be admitted without disturbing what is seen by subject departments to be the essential core of the subject, the new material will remain separate and on the outer. The submission on work experience, for instance, suggests that "... students are more effectively prepared for post-school life when work experience is provided as part of a co-ordinated range of relevant experience and activities." Why is it not co-ordinated? In most schools "it is not accepted amongst staff".

This raises a related problem. A traditional academic curriculum has a status hierarchy, and decision on the total curriculum are made in terms of the relative power of subject departments in the school and not in terms of the needs and expectations of students. The interstate consultants remarked on this. We note the comments of those concerned with Art and Music, for instance, about the place of these subjects in the curriculum. The ascribed status of subjects is reflected in real resource terms. The Art consultant noted one school with one Art teacher in a school of more than 500 students. Study of the submissions from teachers concerned with new or special programs will demonstrate how difficult it is for them to gain a toehold in the struggle for time, money and other material resources to develop their activities.

The traditional curriculum attempts to cater for new knowledge or new societal needs through the addition of new subjects. Hence the term "add-on". Sometimes these find their way into the core but more usually they feature as electives which means that they may not be accessible to all students. If they are considered to be too important to be offered in this manner they are frequently treated through a program of special seminars attended by all, or most students. Sex education is often treated in this way, and is therefore accorded lower status. Other implications flow from this closed system. The interstate consultants were as much concerned with unimaginative teaching

methods as they were with irrelevance of content. Traditional subjects are taught traditionally, that is, on some variation of the transmission model in which the teacher expert imparts knowledge and skills with class groups of 20-35 depending on the subject. Learning activities are teacher-centred: students are receptacles for knowledge. As the submission on Health Education puts it:

> "The curriculum of most schools is very fact and information oriented. There appears to be a protectionist attitude by subject areas to their special body of knowledge. Children are often treated as receptacles for subject matter. Much of the material is academic in nature, catering for the minority who will proceed to secondary college and tertiary institutions. The specialist skills of subjects are often presented as paper exercises unrelated to everyday activities."

There seem to be only a few variations on the transmission model, although a number of teachers are making obvious attempts to treat students as active participants in their learning, and to try different teaching approaches. The closed system and perceptions of community attitudes generally discourage it. There are few examples of team teaching, and the Committee suspects that open classrooms are regarded very unfavourably. The Committee has visited some high schools that are making attempts to provide a different approach, but regrets to note that these schools seem to have been almost publicly penalized for their efforts.

If the traditional subjects cannot make room for new knowledge, and if there is not room on the time-table for important new subjects to be available to all students, then we must seek new models for diversity, and alternatives to a traditional subject-based curriculum.

A number of concepts have been advanced. None of them however have been worked through to a point where a program can be derived and described. One submission makes a plea for holistic education based on the student's own experience. The intentions are clear - relevance and integration. Other submissions speak of the need for adaptability and the development of "anticipatory" intelligence defined variously as the ability to think out the consequence of one's actions and to act accordingly, or to take a forward "social futures" view of the world. The notion of anticipatory education is expanded most significantly in the latest Club of Rome report "No Limits to Learning" (Botkin 1979) mentioned earlier.

An approach with greater currency is the proposition which is contained in Collins and Hughes (1982). What is required for high school students is "powerful knowledge", referred to earlier. Their definition of "powerful knowledge" is contained in their rejection of the CDC Core Curriculum:

> "The current Core Curriculum document (Curriculum Development Centre, 1980) does not get us very far in the radical rethinking of the nature of curriculum which is required. It does not connect enough with the public desire for relevant and real life knowledge. It nods in the direction of personal autonomy and societal awareness while remaining locked into the academic tradition and the perspectives of various disciplines. It gives a gracious wave of the hand to all the traditional areas in the curriculum though with a welcome new stress on process.
>
> This is not enough. An entirely new way of thinking about the curriculum of junior high school is required. It must begin by locating new starting points of common but significant experience and proceed by using recently acquired understanding of intellectual development and of how people can transcend the common-sense meanings which their own experience gives to life. This is what the power of knowledge is all about. But it is radically new to try to get students to reach beyond their immediate experience without first plodding through years of traditional academic study which bears no obvious relationships to day-to-day life. It is not only new, it is particularly difficult - so difficult that no country has yet reached this aim successfully."

"Powerful knowledge" seems to be a very satisfactory way to focus attention on the essential learning that students must have, and to re-examine the existing disciplines. Unfortunately, as the authors say, it is new, and has not yet been fully worked through so that the concept can be used in school-based planning.

Another approach is that, at present, content is determined, largely, not by some test of relevance but by the background interests and training of the teacher. The problems of new content like health and careers being locked out in the struggle for a place in the overcrowded curriculum are not met by revamping the content of existing disciplines. What is required for a shift in content is first for a consensus to be established on a shift in basic purposes and direction. This will not be an effective consensus unless it is arrived at by open debate, involving the total school community of parents, teachers and students. Secondly, what is required is a structural change which ensures that existing subject hegemonies are broken, and that new ones are not able to form. The decisions on content must remain open, and be made initially, and continually re-evaulated in terms of basic purposes and directions. Then decisions on content and methodologies for dealing with it can be considered.

A whole range of options are possible. Much of the desired content may well be contained within revamped traditional subject structures. Present experiments to gather together information and skills required for everyday living into areas of curriculum might be extended. In a problem - or issues - centred curriculum one strategy is to use the problem or issues to demonstrate how different disciplines might be brought to bear.

If it is accepted that the role of high schools is initiation into adult life, a considerable amount of consensus can be shown to exist already on what information and what skills ought to be considered. Combing through submissions yields the following list of characteristics of a general comprehensive high school curriculum. Such a curriculum should:

* pick up neatly and build on each student's experience in primary schools;
* explore language as the most important means of communication and develop competence to think and argue objectively;
* extend basic mathematical skills including use of calculators and computers and devise branching courses for exceptional mathematics students or for special purpose mathematics;
* explore the fundamentals of physical sciences, in particular to establish an understanding of ecological balances;
* teach the use and social implications of modern technologies;
* provide a range of experiences in self-expression and production in various arts and crafts and creative arts;
* teach the economic facts of life including personal economic survival skills and understanding of commerce and industry;
* assist physical development and provide knowledge and experiences in healthful living, including preventive health, sport and recreation;
* through vicarious experiences (such as literature) and discussion, assist students to develop an acceptable self-image and rehearse future adult roles;
* through discovery of their unique skills and abilities and exploration of the world of work, assist students towards a vocational matching;
* through analysis of social institutions and practice in living collaboratively in a school social institution, assist students to develop social responsibility and coherence;
* develop world citizens with tolerance and understanding of the variety of ethnic groups in Australia and the needs and social futures of other nations;
* provide opportunities for students to examine the various systems of beliefs, practices and experiences through which people of different cultures and in different historical eras have found meaning and purpose in life.

If a school community reaches agreement on such a list, it should be possible for teachers to design a curriculum around it. The need is to start with the list, and not from the existing subjects.

Career Education, Work Experience, Transition and Other Related Programs

The problem of a non-adaptive curriculum is nowhere better illustrated than in the case of careers education, work experience and transition and other related programs such as "link" courses. In the struggle for recognition new and peripheral learning activities are usually under-resourced, and if to get resources requires recogition as something significant to be added on, the tactics adopted are likely to be those of the established subjects. Thus in the case of "Career Education" there is a tendency to make an exaggerated claim for the activity. The Career Education Association submits that:

> "... the interests of Career Education are synonymous with education generally in ACT high schools."

Career education is important, but its status needs to be argued on a different basis from that suggested in the submission.

Should there be, for instance, a further expansion and increased recognition of the role of careers co-ordinators in high schools? Both the Career Education Association and the ACT Teachers Federation base their case for at least one qualified careers co-ordinator to each high school on their reading of the current employment scene.

The problems faced by unemployed youth are scarcely visible at a time of low unemployment even though they exist among some groups. These problems are, however, thrown into stark relief at present when unemployment levels have soared. It can be argued therefore that high schools have paid insufficient attention to this need in the past, and that it is only now that the need for careers advice has been given the recognition it deserves. They argue that the role of a careers co-ordinator should extend beyond simply informing students about specific careers. They contend that a wider ranging careers education program involving decision-making, self awarenesss, and transition skills and the provision of specific occupational information should be available in all high schools. Specific conditions for such teachers have been developed by the ACT Careers Education Association.

Currently, funds are made available under the School to Work Transition Program for a series of projects but it is contended that these are insufficient and that additional funds should be made available for career education. The Committee is sympathetic to the view that systems should not rely solely upon money from the School to Work Transition Program to meet the needs of schools in this regard. Systems have an obligation to provide some matching funds for activities of this kind.

Furthermore we agree with the view put to us that schools are unable to plan effectively for Career Education when funds are uncertain and when there is no guarantee of continuing financial support.

The Committee questions the validity, however, of any approach to career education which is not integrated into the school curriculum. Indeed, it questions the use of the term "Transition Education". We believe that if school curricula are properly constructed and integrated with the needs and expectations of the community then the essential relationship between school life and work life should be fully explored and understood. This is far more important than ad hoc measures to assist students to make the transition from school to work.

There are a number of ways in which this integration might occur. If, for instance, Year 10 is regarded as an important decision year, special emphasis should be given in a range of learning activities to assist the impending transition to college, TAFE or work. Social Science might include segments analysing the world of work, with work experience and link courses with TAFE colleges as part of practical experience. Segments on Economics and Commerce might assist the development of consumer awareness and financial survival skills, including personal budgeting. Information on work and careers should be available in the school library. If a school has a well-developed pastoral care or student development program, a priority item might be discussions with individual students aimed at carefully matching their cumulative personal school record against their course and career aspirations, so that they look at their options deliberately and realistically in a reasoned way. Career education is thus a grouping of related activities which cannot be the responsibility of one person. It requires the co-ordination of the work of subject teachers, pastoral care teachers, counsellors and librarians and the organization of activities outside school. If this co-ordination requires professional attention and time, then there is justification for a claim for additional teaching resources, and possibly but not necessarily for the designation of a careers co-ordinator. Such a role, however, should not be artificially created by aggregating activities under a separate banner of Career Education. What is called "Career Education" is some of the information and skills needed by students to prepare for their futures. What is called "Transition Education" is a basic re-orientation of the total curriculum to make it relate more realistically to the student's immediate and long term study and work options; it is for all students and not for any minority of so-called "at risk students."

Career and transition education and related activities are becoming better understood as we widen the context of discussion. We refer elsewhere to present moves to develop a comprehensive youth policy in Australia.

Sexism

At least Career Education and related activities have had some success in getting into the curriculum of high schools, usually by adding on in some way. Other recent initiatives have experienced even greater difficulty. A report was made to the Authority on sexism in education in October 1979, and subsequently the Authority issued a policy statement supporting the main recommendations of the report. A status report written in July 1982 shows that the action of the Authority and the response of schools is, to date, limited. Recent research indicates, for instance, that girls continue to pursue a narrow range of career choices - 55% choose options out of child-care, nursing, teaching, clerical/secretarial, and sales. Whatever slight movement there is away from these traditional patterns sees girls moving more into biological sciences and journalism but not into the physical sciences, mathematics or computing. There is some data to suggest a continuing problem in the tendency of girls to understate their intellectual achievement and potential, and to have a greater concern about human relationships; three girls for every boy, for instance, experience problems in relationships with peers. The submission from the Acting Co-ordinator for the Elimination of Sexism refers to the "... well documented and serious drop in self-esteem of girls between Years 7-10."

If the problem of sexism is to be effectively addressed it will need more than rhetorical commitment on the part of schools and the Authority. The submission to the Review Committee suggests that the problem is not even adequately perceived, and so recommends that: "To make the educational disadvantage of girls visible generally, teachers need Schools Office resources to support and encourage them to undertake action research into unequal interaction in schools." We support this recommendation, and other forms of positive intervention, as for instance, adjustments in Industrial Arts programs and other programs entailing the use of equipment requiring technical competence, so that girls can obtain readier access and use. But above all we support the recommendation for greater flexibility in arrangements for learning which provide for a variety of interactive groups. Task centred co-operation in small learning groups is an effective basis for developing mutual respect amongst individuals and between the sexes. It is also in keeping with our general approach in curriculum in this Report to support suggestions that sex-roles in our society are appropriate matters for direct study in some social sciences context.

Multicultural Education and English as a Second Language

Those responsible for Multicultural Education in ACT high schools have similar problems in obtaining recognition for their important area of concern. Again, the Authority has promoted the importance of multiculturalism but with limited result in schools. Thus one submission laments the absence of "whole school" response to Multicultural Education:

> "... migrant and multicultural education are tacked onto the established curriculum .... too long the responsibility for migrant education has remained with a minority group with little power."

It is positive action, but hardly sufficient, that a few high schools have attempted to develop elective courses in "multiculturalism". The inflexibility of the non-adaptive curriculum encourages such limited responses.

The Committee suggests that in the context of a much more flexible and needs-based approach to curriculum, a number of important issues need to be teased apart. The first is the need for a multicultural dimension to curriculum as an important part of general education. The danger to avoid is over-emphasizing separate ethnic group activites. The Australian College of Education (1982) has suggested that:

> "If Australia is to be more than congeries of bilingual-bicultural people - then it is necessary for all children to learn about different cultures rather than children of an ethnic group being locked into a system which teaches only about their group and the majority group. This perspective, this ideal, clearly influences much of the debate about education but the limited impact of schools as agents of socialization is recognized. The enlisting of parent participation in schools is suggested as a means of widening the impact of schools. The complexities of consciously constructing a society in which cultural difference is accommodated emerges. Perhaps some progress is made in bringing sensitive issues into the light."

The second is to develop a language policy which accords with the above. Integration in a poly-ethnic society is more likely to occur if value is placed on ethnic languages. If to preserve their languages, ethnic groups in the ACT develop ethnic schools which are conducted out of normal school hours, then the achievement of students in their ethnic schools ought to be at least recognized and commended in their normal school setting. We have referred to this possibility in Chapter 11. More positively, high schools might develop approaches to foreign language teaching which effectively incorporate contributions from ethnic backgrounds. We refer readers to the report of the interstate consultant who examined foreign language teaching for some practical suggestions that would make this possible.

A third concern is to effectively meet the needs of recently arrived children. The English as a Second Language (ESL) consultant submits that the present arrangements to develop basic linguistic competence are insufficient. More time for initial language learning, but more importantly, more extensive and sensitive support as recent arrivals make the transition into high school is needed:

> "... students face severe culture shock on arrival to Australia, and then again when they enrol at the high schools. Apart from the work done by the ESL staff, high schools make few concessions and provide few support services for the newly arrived refugee or migrant."

We are advised that there are several hundred children in the ACT schools who are refugees from other countries. We draw attention to a pilot study by Leak (1982). Briefly this exploratory study into the prevalence and manifestation of emotional stress in a group of Vietnamese refugee children identified stress behaviours in a group of children as reported by parents/guardians and teachers, and determined the severity of emotional stress in each child. According to scores on parent/guardian and teacher ratings each child was classified as "no problem", "mild problem", "upper range mild problem" or "clinically disturbed" (severe problem).

Several major areas of concern were identified: the first was that most children appear to be adjusting quite well to life in Australia, while at the same time manifesting a significant number of stress behaviours, to the extent of being classified "clinically disturbed" in some cases. It was apparent that there is a need for reassessment of the role and responsibilities of Indochinese ethnic aides in Australian primary schools, particularly in relation to assisting and supporting refugee children.

A third area related to the need for greater emphasis to be given to recognizing the ability and need of Vietnamese children to contribute from their own culture to the learning and experience of the host country children.

The Committee is of the view that thought should be given to the teaching of all refugee children and to ensuring that their particular difficulties are understood.

In a community as poly-ethnic as Canberra, and one which hosts representatives of so many national governments, there are unmatched resources for developing multicultural and ethnic language programs as well as provision for recent arrivals. The freeing up of the traditional subject approach in curriculum is a necessary pre-condition for high schools to increase their effectiveness in these areas. In our general recommendation that parents be more closely involved in curriculum, we commend particularly special efforts made to contact and include parents of ethnic groups who, because of language difficulties and other sensitivities, have tended to keep their distance from schools. There are plenty of examples of effective practice in involving ethnic groups in high schools throughout Australia.

Religious and Moral Education

Few areas of the curriculum are more sensitive than that of values education and yet there is very little informed public discussion of the matter. We believe that it is here that the process of negotiation provides a mechanism for frank and informed public discussion, with a view to arrival at a consensus.

We take the view that values education is an integral part of all education as values and attitudes are generally transmitted in the course of regular teaching and learning. Furthermore, as we have said throughout, the process of discussion and negotiation is democracy in action and cannot but assist pupils to form a value system based upon democratic values and the importance of individuals in society.

Alongside of this however is the question of formal moral and religious education.

The Committee received only one submission on this subject. This was critical of what is offered in schools in this area. The author claimed that the ACT Joint Commission for Church Development Religious Education Working Group recently found, after surveying the field, that

> "there appears to be no special Religious Education or General Religious Education in High Schools, though there are a number of voluntary Christian Groups meeting."

The author advocates the teaching of religious education as part of the curriculum in government high schools.

The submission appears to ignore the fact that decisions about curriculum are made by school boards in the ACT and that it would in inappropriate for the Schools Authority to demand the introduction of religious teaching into schools by administrative fiat.

Nonetheless the Committee takes the matters of moral and religious education seriously. It recognizes that these are complex and sensitive areas about which there is a good deal of very confused thinking.

Students in secondary schools should be assisted to develop a morality and the capacity to understand and to discriminate between different systems of value and belief. In primary schools emphasis, quite properly, is upon training in habits and behaviour. At the secondary stage, however, students should develop a capacity to understand their responsibility for their actions.

The link between the development of powers of moral reasoning and religion comes through the development of an understanding of, and commitment to value and belief systems.

Clearly a value system for the Australian society can be identified; not so a belief system. Thus the former can reasonably be taught to all students whereas the second cannot.

In multi-cultural Australia, there is a need for schools to offer students a conceptual framework by means of which they can make sense of the various traditions in our culture and of their own experiences, and subject the various traditions and value systems to a critical assessment. This implies that government schools have a resonsibility to encourage analysis and interpretation in the area of human religious experience, and that their curricula will be deficient if they fail to include such a systematic study. Clearly there are some belief systems which, while they are not universally accepted in Australian society, nonetheless have an accepted place within it. Such a system is the Christian faith which, we believe, should be taught to all children along with other belief systems without indoctrination.

It should be noted that the Committee does not see a place for Religious Instruction, which is a narrow treatment of any faith along sectarian lines.

Other Curriculum Options

What we have tried to emphasize in the above discussions is the difficulty that high schools have in responding to new demands and initiatives whilst the curriculum is structured on a traditional core-elective subject basis. There are other examples which have been the subject of submissions. For instance, the Committee was pleased to note that consideration had been given to the need for education for leisure in some schools.

Recognizing that within this century there has been a reduction of the order of 40% in the number of hours in a lifetime during which people might anticipate undertaking paid work, the question of education for leisure is seen as being of considerable significance. There is no certainty that this figure might not fall even further.

Accordingly, the Committee urges all schools to devote even greater energy to ensuring that leisure education programs are given due recognition. Students should be encouraged to develop interests, foster their talents, and explore all avenues of self-development.

These activities should be encouraged both through mainstream programs and also extra-curricular activities. Every opportunity should be taken to co-operate with community and other groups outside of the schools to provide opportunities for students to undertake projects co-operatively.

A number of schools are already attempting interest extension programs, sometimes by using less busy times near the end of the school year. With more flexible timetabling and packaging of learning activities these programs might well be more easily fitted into a week-by-week timetable.

In the process of opening up thinking about the curriculum there is considerable scope for high schools in the ACT and elsewhere in Australia to move away from the stranglehold of the fixed school day and indeed the fixed school term or semester. Schools can function effectively without all students and all teachers in a school starting and finishing at the same time. This is an organizational aspect which warrants discussion among boards, teachers, students and parents. It is one which may gain additional significance as high schools of diminishing size attempt to maintain a wide range of curriculum options.

Summary

Standards of teaching and learning in the ACT are in line with those in the various state systems, and many of the problems that have to be faced are basically the same. The majority of students express satisfaction with the curriculum offering, but a substantial minority find it too academic and lacking in application to life. National studies show that this is a problem throughout Australia. Research carried out among ACT parents indicates that they value the social purpose of education, while showing a concern for standards, and that they desire greater involvement in their children's education. Curriculum development in the ACT, as in many other places, has not been radical and there has been little real movement in the last ten years. Many individual teachers and some schools are making an effort to cater for changed needs but usually without affecting the basic curriculum structure. In general there is an over-emphasis on narrow content and formal teaching. New subjects and emphases tend to become additions to the standard core-plus elective program. In this development the status of subject departments becomes very important. If there is to be a balance in high school education, catering for all the needs of all students, school communities must develop a clear statement of their aims and desired outcomes and use this as a basis for re-shaping the curriculum.

In the next chapter we discuss in some detail present practices in student assessment and reporting and our suggestions for future development.

One of the great constraints which is seen in major curriculum overhaul is perceived community attitudes toward assessment and certification. It appears from submissions that many teachers and parents, not to mention the various groups that make up the "back to basics" lobby, believe that certification at Year 10 level is or should be a powerful motivating force, and that student assessment should have a "sorting" role in deciding employment and further education paths.

To our mind these views are not consistent with the realities of the present social and educational scene. Most students in the ACT now continue in school past the Year 10 level. There is a very small group which obtains employment directly after Year 10, even apprenticeships increasingly being taken up by students who have continued to Years 11 and 12. The announced intention of the Federal Government to encourage all young people to continue at school beyond Year 10 will further decrease the sorting need at that level.

We see assessment in a very different light.

The explicit and implicit assumptions which underlie processes of student assessment have a powerful influence on the outcomes of schooling. Student assessment is an integral part of the learning process and, increasingly, is being seen as an important component of curriculum planning and not merely as supplementary to it. In this context, student assessment is seen as a description of student performance and, insofar as it relates to individual teachers and students, it is seen as a means primarily of providing information to the learner and the teacher. Thus, student assessment should assist the effectiveness of learning outcomes. There are however, other purposes and a more comprehensive list includes:

* to know and understand students so that their needs can be better met through more appropriate teaching and improved learning;

* to identify the particular talents, interests and potentials a student may possess so that benefit may be gained through development of these;

* to indicate levels of performance to students, parents and/or employers;

* to assist young people in their selection of particular courses or careers;

* to assist in the selection of young people for particular courses, institutions or careers.

These purposes are very broad and it follows that not all assessment methods are necessarily appropriate for all purposes. Tests which, for example, are designed to identify deficiencies as a precursor to remediation are necessarily different from those which are designed to identify levels of proficiency.

The purposes we have identified above have an individual school, teacher and student focus. We have not included in this discussion forms of assessment which are carried out primarily as a means of monitoring levels of achievement in particular areas on a system basis. Nor have we included assessment of student performance designed to evaluate the effectiveness of particular curriculum initiatives. The Committee believes that there is a legitimate place for both of these activities of system monitoring. The purposes for carrying out such monitoring by measurement of student achievement are different from those which are focussed on the performance of individual students. We believe that these activities are best described as a separate topic. (See Chapter 10).

In much of what is written about purposes of schooling, including statements in Guidelines on Relationships Within the Education System (1974), the Primary Review (1981), the green paper, Future Directions in Curriculum (1983), a number of assumptions are made about learning, student assessment, content, methodology and outcomes. These include the following:

* schools should encourage all individuals to strive for excellence;

* schools should allow for and provide for different rates and styles which individuals develop in their learning;

* schools should emphasize communication, tolerance and co-operation as a community;

* schools have to respond to a range of value problems in society and may adopt different responses to different values, life styles, ethnic backgrounds and aspirations;

* there should be a progression towards acceptance by students of an increased responsibility for their own learning;

* students should achieve some success, gain a desire to learn and develop a sense of self worth in a secure, stable but challenging environment;

* preparation for the adult world requires social, physical, aesthetic, emotional and moral development in addition to intellectual development;

* interaction between teacher and learner is at the heart of schooling.

These assumptions are reflected in the responses given by Year 10 students in research studies conducted for this Review. A large majority of students recognize the need for intellectual development and evince a desire to learn. They also identify clearly the importance of development in other areas but are somewhat critical of opportunitites provided for them to develop a sense of self-worth and to be treated as persons in their own right.

Furthermore, there was a clear indication that those students who were most involved in their own assessment or who were given structured revision, and who therefore understood more clearly what was to be tested were the most satisfied about assessment procedures.

Assessment not only comprises what is to be assessed but also considers the 'how','when','why' and 'by whom' , for all of these affect the relationship between the student and the assessor. They are an integral part of teaching and learning and are recognized as extremely potent forms of communication between teacher and learner. Student assessment, sometimes irrespective of a school's stated priorities and values, becomes an overt statement of priority. Thus, the Committee believes that instead of examining school documents, a more reliable way of determining a school's priorities, its aims and objectives, is to examine the what, how and when and by whom student assessment is conducted. This, of course, should not be so. If schools are committed to their objectives, as stated in curriculum policies and school programs, it should be incumbent upon them to consider their assessment processes to see that these accurately reflect the stated priorities. Reports of the curriculum consultants engaged by the Review Committee draw attention in a number of instances to a perceived lack of congruence between the aims of courses and the assessment methods used. It is the Committee's view, that again, this is not peculiar to ACT high schools.

Furthermore, it seems to the Committee that the processes of school based curriculum development which have emerged in ACT high schools have resulted in assessment policies being developed on a subject basis and not on a school basis. That is, school policy on assessment is the aggregate of subject departmental policies, rather than subject departmental policies being a sub-set of a school policy. This again reflects a concern the Committee has about the dominance of the influence of subject departments within high schools.

In the processes for the approval of education programs in schools, a school board is required to provide the Chief Education Officer or his delegate with information on a number of aspects of the school's organization and educational programs, and include a statement of approval by the school board. This information includes student assessment and reporting procedures.

Moreover, a school board in fulfilling its responsibilities for the approval of courses of study offered by the school within its approved education program, is expected to provide the Chief Education Officer or his delegate with, inter alia, details of the student assessment procedures to be employed. In discussions with schools, with senior Authority officers, with subject consultants and from the Committee's own perusal of approved education programs and registered courses, we detect inconsistencies in the approaches of schools to student assessment. These are in addition to the lack of congruence between aims of courses and assessment methods used, to which we have already referred.

Perhaps a more important aspect is the failure of schools to assess areas of the curriculum other than those encompassed within designated subject areas. Some learning outcomes for example may be considered to be pervasive and be included in all subject areas, but it is likely that these would rarely be assessed directly or indirectly.

The Committee is of the view that there would be value in schools giving greater prominence to assessment of skills and abilities in areas of the curriculum where this is currently not the practice, even though achievement in these areas is espoused as aims or objectives of the school. Certainly there are difficulties and schools would need support to work co-operatively with each other and the Office in developing skills in this area. The Committee also considers that it is more likely that there would be greater congruence with stated curriculum objectives if there were greater emphasis where appropriate on criterion referenced assessment, in which those aspects of performance that the assessment is to describe are spelt out prior to the assessment.

The notion of criterion referenced assessment we have used is the general one defined by Brown (1981) as

> "assessment that provides information about the specific knowledge and abilities of pupils through their performance on various kinds of tasks that are interpretable in terms of what the pupils know or can do, without reference to the performance of others."

On the other hand, norm referenced assessment is concerned with comparing pupils' attainments with those of others. Strictly speaking, it implies a comparison with some normative group, with norms being established through valid and reliable processes. In practice, the "normative" group in most traditional school assessment is established on a somewhat subjective and arbitrary basis, depending on an individual teacher or school judgement on what constitutes a "pass". Nevertheless, the process establishes a student's relative status. Thus, with norm referenced assessment, says Brown (1981):

> "We may have some general knowledge of what the assessment measure was concerned with, but normative scores will not tell us precisely what the pupil knows or can do; they will only tell us whether he or she knows more (or less) and can do more (or less) than the others. In situations where we have fixed quotas (such as the number of university places available) such information is what is needed. However, where we are concerned with what it is a pupil has achieved or can perform, such assessment is not useful."

In criterion referenced assessment the criteria are the aspects of the performance to be described and the assessment identifies what a student knows or has attained or is competent in. Some difficulties can arise in specifying a "standard" deemed to be "satisfactory" and indeed this may be particularly inappropriate to most of the non-cognitive aims and objectives identified in a school's educational program and its associated courses.

The Committee considers that a movement towards criterion referenced assessment, where appropriate, would have some positive features.

It leads to a more responsive mode which requires dialogue between teacher and student, a clearer understanding by students of expectations a teacher has of them and provides a climate which is more conducive to a student wishing to modify the original performance. When assessment processes become congruent with curriculum objectives the processes become more responsive. The Committee is aware that in some schools, subject departments have introduced criterion referenced assessment. In some, there has been a movement towards incorporating at least some component of self-assessment. The Committee sees this as valuable in that the learner gradually takes a larger share in the assessment process and begins to describe aspects of the performance that might help future performance.

Relevant here is the comment by Brown (1981) in reference to a suggestion by Thorndike (1913)

> "that where energies are directed towards pupils improving on their own previous performance rather than on competing with the performance of others, the motivation for everyone will rise to that restricted to those near the top in a competitive norm-referenced scheme".

Wilson (1983) in referring to traditional, norm-referenced assessment comments that

> "some few students strive for excellence, many strive for mediocrity, represented by a pass. Others are simply discouraged through a history of being labelled failures".

The impression we have gained, however, is that by and large it is the so-called "traditional" assessment methods which are most used in the high schools. Such methods usually describe student performance as a mark or a grade based on a normative order of merit and derived from tests, assignments or projects which students are expected to complete after specified learning periods.

There is indeed considerable security in accepting another's judgement of one's performance, even if the judgement is negative, for it removes any necessity to do anything about the performance, that is, improving.

Norm-referenced assessment compares a student's attainment with that of others and establishes a relative status. Yet this is not stated as an objective in any of the school programs we examined. It is also hard to reconcile an emphasis on norm-referenced assessment with the oft-stated objective of catering for the needs of individual students, a considerable difficulty when all students are assessed at the same time and in the same way. The Committee wonders whether indeed the normative nature of much school assessment does not contribute substantially to a reduction in desire to learn and a sense of self-worth in those who are assured of failure - failure not necessarily in not achieving a specified level of attainment but failure relative to the attainments of others. In such circumstances, the emphasis is necessarily on competition, not co-operation. This is not to gainsay competition per se, either competing against oneself or against others. What is questioned is whether such a form of assessment is the most educationally valuable option available.

The Committee's views in this regard are not unrelated to its comments about a need for changes in the nature of interpersonal relationships between teachers and students in high schools.

Let us again stress that this does not mean that all students are unhappy and that there is continual conflict between students and teachers. Many students enjoy splendid relationships with their teachers, both individually and in classes. There is, however, sufficient evidence to suggest that there are too many for whom the interpersonal relationships of their schooling experience are not satisfactory. This is alarming, not only in itself but because of its deleterious effects on learning outcomes in more structured parts of the curriculum, the negative effects on learning opportunities for other students who are not experiencing these problems, and in contributing to stress experienced by teachers. Changes in attitudes to assessment and in the processes used could lead to positive gains not only in learning in subject areas but in the neglected area of the curriculum - the development of social and interpersonal skills. These have been commented on by the curriculum consultants where such changes have been observed in subject departments in some schools.

The Committee has examined the McGowan Report (1981) on the organization of secondary schooling and on assessment and certification in the junior secondary years in NSW. We are in substantial agreement with much of the thinking which underlies that Committee's approach to student assessment.

The McGowan Committee endorsed the concept of school-based curriculum development, within a framework of approval within the school and then by a central authority. This process would pay particular attention to assessment procedures to be used. The central authority would have the responsibility to develop methods to assist schools in course construction and in the assessment of student achievement and to carry out research in related areas. More particularly, the Committee recommended that:

> "R15. Students should know exactly what is required of them and published course outlines should include, inter alia:
> (a) The aims and objectives of the course.
> (b) The material to be covered and the learning experiences to be provided.
> (c) What materials would need to be provided by the students and their cost.
> (d) What achievements will need to be demonstrated by students in order for them to pass the course.
> (e) Specific details of the assessment procedures and the course requirements."

We believe that there is much to be gained by making students more aware of what is expected of them. Although this is appropriate even in Year 7, the level of sophistication in which questions of course aims and assessment processes can be discussed or negotiated increases with the maturity of the students. Again, we are heartened by what is being attempted but believe that further movement in this direction is needed.

The McGowan Committee stated:

> "We believe that schools are already competent to assess the achievement of their students and should be given the responsibility, although we also believe that there will be a continuing need for teachers to be given in-service assistance to refine further their techniques in both course-building and assessing."

Schools in the ACT are well advanced in this area. Policies on assessment are included in the school's approved education program. Registration of courses requires details of student assessment procedures to be provided. As we have indicated, however, we believe that more needs to be done and this would require some system initiatives in in-service education and support. Furthermore, although the policies on assessment in individual schools are publicly available, at the school or from the Office, we believe that there would be value in all subject departments and all schools following the McGowan Report recommendation of making these explicit at student level.

Standardized Testing

The Committee not unexpectedly received some submissions and some comments which suggested that some form of uniform or standardized testing should be used across the system, primarily as a means of ensuring that standards were being maintained but also to provide reassurance to employers in particular that there is comparability among gradings assigned by different schools.

We have formed the view that there is a place for a range of "standardized tests" to be used in schools. By "standardized tests" we mean here those tests carefully designed and evaluated by experts in measurement and available commercially or through the ACER. Such tests can be very useful to assist teachers to detect the special difficulties of individuals or groups of students. We refer particularly to diagnostic tests which can guide a teacher in overcoming specific identified difficulties or which suggest a need for assistance from a resource or remedial teacher. We see little value in using norm-referenced tests if the main reason is to see how many of, say, Year 8 students in a school are above or below the norm in reading. If the results are believed to be anomalous for a group of students or for individual students, and some action is taken, such testing can be of value. On the other hand, more is to be gained by using specific diagnostic tests.

Similarly, we see little, if any, value for individual students or schools in applying standardized tests, either norm-referenced or criterion-referenced, across the system. The evaluation of Power et al (1982) of the Australian Studies in Student Performance Project (ASSP) reinforces our view that, although the major purposes of ASSP were achieved "the information value of the results and the level of public knowledge of (such studies) can be questioned".

It is our view that there are more effective ways of ensuring accountability of educational systems; the ACT is well placed in this regard. We also believe that the resources to develop and sustain such a program would be better used in improving school assessment processes.

We also have a concern that such system-wide testing programs give an undue emphasis to those skills which are most easily assessed and diverts attention and resources away from assisting teachers to assess educational outcomes in important areas such as the development of attitudes, judgement, social development, interaction and so on. Thus, our recommendation to the Authority is for it to provide resources and support activities designed to enhance school-based student assessment. It is our belief that the more skilful teachers become in relating student assessment to curriculum objectives, the better these are understood and involve students, and the more effectively parents and the school board are involved in the process, the less concern there will be in the community about what schools and the system are achieving. We return to this last issue in the discussion on certification.

We note also that the report of the Primary Review recommended that increased attention should be given in primary schools to assisting teachers and parents to develop skills in, and become better informed about student assessment.

Assessment, Reporting and the Year 10 Certificate

This report advocates curriculum review in high schools, beginning with shared concerns and consensus of parents, teachers and students on basic purposes and directions. One of the matters which requires debate in such a review is the whole issue of student assessment and reporting, both interim and at the end of Year 10. It is a debate which leads inevitably back to basic purposes and directions and directly challenges important elements in teaching practices. It is illustrated by the dilemma which faces ACT high schools, a dilemma which is manifested in ambivalence and confusion about the Year 10 Certificate.

We have indicated our view that, within the many purposes for assessing students, a major and primary concern in the ongoing life of the school is with the assessment of students as a means of improving educational outcomes. We have suggested that more attention should be given to this matter and that system support for teachers and parents is needed.

We now turn our attention to other purposes of student assessment, and, in particular, to the communication of information on student progress to parents, employers to assist in the selection of young people for particular courses, institutions or careers.

All ACT high schools have developed their own approaches to communicating with parents, both in general and in relation to individual students. These approaches include formal reporting of student progress on a term and/or semester basis, ad hoc contact with individual parents, newsletters, parent-teacher visiting nights and the encouragement of an 'open-door' policy. In discussions with parents and with members of school boards, the Committee gained the impression that there was general satisfaction about the processes of reporting information about students to parents. This view is borne out in large measure by our research study on assessment and reporting.

We find that the situation is different when we turn to certification at the end of Year 10. The Report of the Inquiry into the ACT Year 10 Certificate discusses the confusion and diversity in purposes for which the certificate is perceived as useful. Its majority view was that the certificate marks completion of high school and acts as a record of achievement. "Students felt that after four years at school they were entitled to a statement which indicated the good things they had done and the strengths they have". The action which was taken as a result of the Inquiry included issue of a document on methods of generating grades, which attempts to make the assessing process more consistent and comparable from school to school.

In comment to the Committee, the Director of Curriculum noted that the Inquiry raised the possibility of following the South Australian "exit report" method as an alternative to the issue of a certificate, but there was little enthusiasm in schools for the proposal and no action on it has occurred. High schools generally favoured the retention of the Year 10 Certificate in the ACT as marking the completion of a phase of education and reinforcing school identity and ethos. The Committee is unconvinced.

The suspect validity and reliability of certification based on competitive ranking, the inconsistency of competitive labelling with other aims espoused in the schools, the limited use to which the certificate is put, the cost of time and effort in competitive assessment, and the ambivalence of many in the system about its worth and educational effect, suggests that the debate on assessment should be part of the debate on basic purposes and directions in education in high schools. There has been some shift and amelioration in methods of assessment, in particular the broadening of the category bands A-E. If schools are to tackle the problem of inbuilt failure, if they move towards individualized and negotiated programs, if they seek to develop a richer and more varied curriculum with the aim of promoting social and individual growth and competence, much more sophisticated ways of measuring growth and maintaining measures by accumulation over time are going to be required. Whatever shift is to occur must involve total school communities in debate.

There are a number of myths associated with assessment. One of these noted by the Inquiry on the ACT Year 10 Certificate is that standards of schooling are declining: the reality noted is that student competencies are not rising rapidly enough to meet the expectations of some sections of the community. These expectations, ironically, are satisfied by a system of competitive assessment that gives the appearance of objectivity and fairness. A related myth is that assessment is part of rigour in learning. Rigour in learning is a measure of application, discipline and careful methodology: there is no necessary connection with assessment. Competitive assessment may be used as a whip to crack, or as an inducement for the better performers to perform: it is no incentive to those shown by the assessment system to be continual failures. The possibility of failure is the tip of the whip, and to use it to motivate is to use a form of disguised coercion. This is what most people mean by assessment adding to rigour. A third myth more peculiar to Canberra is that external and objective assessment is necessary because of the high mobility rate of students in high schools. The reality, as the Career Education Association's submission points out, is that this high mobility is a strong argument for a shift from certification to a system of highly personalized cumulative recording of each student's learning activities and outcomes. If as a result of debate a decision is made to move towards such a scheme, intensive and thorough in-servicing of teachers is necessary.

We have considered a number of submissions made to us on the future of the Year 10 Certificate, reviewed the information available from the research studies commissioned and noted the Report of the Inquiry into the ACT Year 10 Certificate (1979). There appear to have been shifts in the attitudes of some of the groups who made submissions to the Inquiry. These may relate to changes in job opportunities for school leavers at Year 10 level and to the fact that an increasing proportion of students undertaking TAFE courses do so from secondary colleges rather than from high schools. Our interpretation is that the Year 10 Certificate is now less useful than it was as a credential for gaining entry to employment or to other educational institutions. Certainly, it is not regarded as particularly helpful by secondary colleges.

The Inquiry into the ACT Year 10 Certificate drew attention to problems in grading. Following receipt of this report the Schools Authority asked that a paper be prepared on grading. This paper (October 1980) forwarded to secondary principals gives a good analysis of methods used and problems experienced. The magnitude of these problems and their difficulty in resolution add weight to the Committee's concerns about the value of retaining the Year 10 Certificate.

One of the problems in its retention in its present form is that it assumes processes of assessment which lead finally to what has been a traditional role of labelling, selecting and credentialling students. If this is to continue at Year 10 level, there is a need for a certificate which is a public measure of a student's achievement measured on the basis of some comparative ranking against other students or against some preconceived "standard". Similarly, if such a certificate is an important credential in getting a job or for moving from high school to college or TAFE courses, then we would argue that steps would need to be taken to ensure greater comparability from school to school by some process of moderation. We believe that these arguments are no longer valid as increasing retention to Year 11 occurs and is likely to continue.

A further concern we have with the retention of the present Year 10 Certificate is that giving importance to testing and ranking has inevitable effects on the curriculum and may be another case of the tail wagging the dog, in this case the assessment tail wags the curriculum dog. The curriculum can place an overwhelming emphasis on teaching in order to assess. Teachers are easily reduced into thinking that they have 'taught' the curriculum if they can get students to perform in a test when in fact the main thing taught is how to do tests. There is a whole literature on test validity and reliability which has been largely ignored in schools. The debate has instead concentrated on technical means of expressing performances. Ignored most of all, however, is the effect of testing and comparative ranking on the morale and performances of students in learning. Research in 'labelling' theory, for instance, demonstrates that students tend

to perform in accordance with the public label that they are given. In learning, if told that they are "average" or "below average" or "failures", students will tend to perform accordingly. If the further quite loose, and pernicious equation is drawn between performances in school tests and intelligence then a label can have devastating effects, not the least of which is to close off the possibility of intellectual development. As the Schools Commission document on the 15-16 year old argues, high schools do very well what they are intended to do, that is, to fail students. But is it what they are intended to do?

The research studies provided us with other views on the Year 10 Certificate. Year 10 students were equally divided on whether they understood the methods teachers who work out the grades used for their Year 10 Certificate. A significant number (46%) of students would like to see a system-wide Year 10 Certificate similar to that awarded at the end of Year 12, instituted instead of the present school-assessed, system-endorsed certificate. However, 22% of the students disagreed with this view. The views of Year 11 students and recent school leavers were not markedly different. This suggests to us some uncertainty about the validity of the present system.

We are less clear on the views of teachers about the Year 10 Certificate although some information is available from the research. Comments made about the value of assessment in general would seem to suggest that the Year 10 Certificate is seen to have substantial motivational value. On the other hand, this must surely be undermined by the fact that nearly all students receive a certificate. Some see the certificate as a benchmark, a culmination of the student's work in high school and as having a certain symbolism. Concerns were, however, expressed about variations in ways of assessing students and in ensuring comparability across the system. Problems were also seen in the effect of the Year 10 Certificate on assessment in Years 9 and 10 compared with Years 7 and 8. It would appear that the Year 10 Certificate forces teachers to compromise on approaches to assessment.

Many of these same issues are considered in some detail in the McGowan Report. The Select Committee canvasses questions of comparability of awards and the use and limitations of moderation procedures, particularly the potentially negative influences of the moderation procedures at the end of Year 10 on the processes of schooling. The Select Committee was convinced that the School Certificate had lost its value as a credential and should be abolished. It considers that schools must have other ways in which assurances can be given to the community that its expectations are being met. It discards the notion of external examinations and recommends that schools should present their courses and assessment policies for approval and that they should be subject to regular visits from an authority independent of the school system.

Practice in ACT high schools already meets the first condition. An alternative system to the NSW proposal exists in the ACT for accreditation of courses at secondary colleges.

Our view is that the ACT Year 10 Certificate has also in large measure lost its value as a credential but that it exerts some constraining influences on processes of schooling in high schools. If, as stated by the Committee of Inquiry into the ACT Year 10 Certificate,

> "the Certificate has been and should be primarily a report to a student and the parents and is only secondarily of use to an employer or educational institution as a broad record of subjects covered and of achievement therein"

we believe that this information can be conveyed more effectively in other ways. We therefore recommend that the ACT Schools Authority discontinue the use of the Year 10 Certificate.

In its absence, what measures can be taken to assure parents and the community that high schools are fulfilling their charter?

We would argue that the stage has now been reached that completion of Year 10 represents reaching a stage in schooling and is not an end point. In some ways it is an organizational artefact, as is Year 6. We believe that if the level of participation we advocate is achieved and if a high level of congruence between assessment and curriculum objectives is achieved, parents and the community would have a higher level of assurance than currently prevails. We recognize, however that some students will leave the education system during high school or at the end of Year 10 and that schools have an obligation to these students. In these instances, we support the view expressed by the Committee of Inquiry into the ACT Year 10 Certificate that a form of school leaver statement should be developed for use by ACT schools. It would be "common throughout the system yet allowing a degree of flexibility to suit the differing curricula of individual schools". It would replace present statements of attainment issued to students before the end of Year 10. We leave open the question of whether the same statement would be appropriate for students leaving during Years 11 and 12.

We recognize that there will be difficulties in transition but believe that these will reduce as approaches to assessment change and greater emphasis is given to reporting assessment on a criterion-referenced basis.

Some further comment on the question of public credibility in the absence of a Year 10 Certificate is needed. We return to the question of course accreditation in Chapter 11.

Summary

There is a general view among the community and to an extent among teachers, that assessment has the functions of motivating students and of sorting them for employment and future study. The changing employment pattern and increased retention of students at school considerably reduces the need for sorting at the junior high school level. The motivational role of assessment is considerably overstated, especially among lower achievers whose motivation is more likely to be decreased by the near certainty of failure. Assessment has other functions more compatible with school goals, of assisting the effectiveness of learning, leading to remediation and the fostering of special talents. But in most schools assessment is not related to goals and is usually based on the policies of subject departments rather than of the school as a whole. Schools do not assess those areas of the curriculum which are not directly subject-related. Schools should move towards criterion-referenced rather than norm referenced assessment, where students are assessed on what they can do rather than against what others can do, and towards the involvement of students in their own assessment which has proved to be valuable in motivation. Students should be made aware of the requirements of assessment.

Standardized tests are a valuable aid in diagnosis, but have little value when used for system-wide testing. There are other, better methods for ensuring accountability. Standards in Australia are not falling, but rather are not rising rapidly enough to meet the expectations of some people. Assessment does not automatically lead to higher standards of performance.

There appears to be general satisfaction with the reporting methods used by schools, but there are still some weaknesses in the Year 10 Certificate. In view of what has been said regarding assessment and the reduced need for sorting at Year 10 level there seems to be little point in retaining the Year 10 Certificate.

We recommend that the ACT Year 10 Certificate be discontinued, and replaced by a comprehensive school leavers' statement, common throughout the system, and vouched for by the Authority yet allowing a degree of flexibility to suit the differing curricula of individual schools.

We also recommend that the issues and skills involved in assessment, reporting and certification should be the subject of discussion and education, with the moral support and material assistance of the Schools Authority.

In Chapter 8 we look in more detail at the developmental needs of students in high schools.

More satisfying and interesting courses of study and assessment methods designed to assist students with their learning rather than to motivate them would certainly overcome much of the boredom and dissatisfaction which is currently expressed by students.

At the risk of seeming excessively repetitious we state again our basic premise that we are not encouraging soft options. We certainly advocate reforms in order to make students keen to reach higher levels of achievement, but not to lower these levels.

The easing of problems associated with the formal curriculum will not, however, completely remove the causes of dissatisfaction with school or alienation. Alienation or estrangement should not be seen solely as influencing the active and even violent rejection of learning that one sees from time to time among students. Certainly there are such students who express their estrangement in a violent fashion. We also know, however, that such students comprise a very small minority. We are concerned to bring to notice the group, which teachers frequently do not notice, or ignore, for whom school appears irrelevant and who merely go through the motions of conformity.

The problem of alienation is compounded by the increasing numbers of students who remain at school beyond the compulsory age. In the past many of these young people would have left school and entered a world where they would be accepted as young adults and expected to take responsibility for their own lives. By staying at school, often with no real motivation, they continue to be exposed to paternalism and restriction.

The studies mentioned earlier, and our own research confirm that for a significant proportion of students these restrictions are particularly irksome. The social conditions under which they live, and the pressures to which they are subject in some cases create added problems.

Most students, at some stage in their school life, experience feelings of dissatisfaction with school for reasons which are well recognized. Research for this Review reveals that, asked about the four most difficult problems teenagers today have to overcome, they responded thus:

* 25% of all problems mentioned were school-related (eg. relationship with teachers, authoritarianism, work, assignments, rules, deciding course choices, homework, assessment, uniforms, physical conditions/equipment);

* 16% related to adolescent peer group - including pressure to conform, drugs, smoking, sex, self-esteem in relation to peers, discrimination by peers and generally making friends;

* 14% related to parents and family - getting on with parents, parent pressure re school, study; expectations, parents not understanding; money; problems associated with separation/divorce/parents living apart;

* 13% related to future life - especially job/career prospects - especially re unemployment, moving schoolwork, choosing a job, leaving home, choosing what to do in secondary college;

Asked about their concerns:

* 21% said that needing help with personal problems was of major concern - half of these said that they were getting little or no help at school;

* At least 25% of students appear to have learned little about themselves and feel little, if any, sense of self-respect. Up to half the students feel that people don't care much about their views or think much of them.

These concerns expressed by Canberra students are congruent with those quoted in research from other parts of Australia - such as that done by Meade (1981) in Sydney and Dynan (1980) in Perth. Even more significant, however, are the findings of Anderson (1980) in Canberra, that the institution of the secondary colleges had largely removed the school-based problems from Years 11 and 12 students, leaving the Years 7-10 students in a similar situation to those in the rest of the country.

There is however, a curious mismatch in the perceptions that teachers have of the problems of their students. Of all their comments:

* 28% referred to problems related to economic situation, job market, uncertain life futures;

* 16% referred to problems associated with the wider society, social changes, expectations;

* 16% referred to problems in developing self-direction;

* 15% referred to problems associated with parents, family, home;

* 14% referred to peer pressures, peer culture;

* 4% referred to school-related problems.

The most significant mismatch is the perception of school-related problems. A significant proportion of teachers apparently do not realize that school is such a concern to so many students.

This research mirrors in the Canberra scene the wider research reported in Collins and Hughes (1982), which led them to describe high schools as environments in which students expressed their "...concern about discipline, indignation at the undermining of self-respect and self-confidence, the feeling that many teachers were uninterested in students as persons, the failure of schools to help with self and interpersonal awareness, bitterness at petty punishments, resentment of lack of freedom".

Teachers and Students

85% of students in the Year 10 sample say that their relationship with teachers is generally "at least satisfactory", but 26% reported that what they liked least about school was their relationship with particular teachers. A similar percentage would like to see changes in teachers' behaviour and attitudes and a "freer atmosphere". In particular they would like less condescension from their teachers, elimination of forms of discipline that embarrass students in front of others, and more opportunity for students to express their own opinions. Amongst Year 10 students, most students recognize and accept the teachers' authority in schools, and agree that students are encouraged to develop self-discipline: they tend to disagree with the ways schools are run, the use of teachers' authority and how rules and discipline procedures are determined. When asked to comment on teachers, the comments are more negative than positive when they refer to individual teachers. They say that the most important area in which teaching needs to be improved is that of relating to students as young adults.

Students' views on relationships are summarized thus:

* teaching most needs to be improved in the area of relating to students as young adults. This is seen as most important in a teacher;

* students made more negative than positive comments about teachers, but most of these were about some teachers or individuals rather than all teachers;

* students judge teachers in terms of qualitites such as caring for students, respect for them, friendliness, fairness, acceptance of students as people;

* most students "get on satisfactorily" with most teachers, though they want teachers to listen more to their views, give more personal attention. 15% do not get on well with most teachers;

* most students think that teachers are fair but a substantial minority (40%) disagree;

* 84% say that teachers should listen more to what students have to say;

* 59% say that they need less talk from teachers and more discussion;

* asked what they liked least about school slightly more than a quarter of all comments referred to teachers in general, or specific teachers;

* asked what would make schools better about a quarter of all changes suggested referred to teachers, including comments about improved student-teacher relationships, with students wanting to be treated in a more adult way;

* for most students school provides an excellent opportunity to learn to get on with others. For 10-15% school has not given them this experience;

* peer relationships represent 16% of all student problems.

Teachers are concerned about relationships with students:

* student-related problems were 42% of all responses by teachers to a question on their problems. 8% of the problems referred specifically to dealing with problems and dilemmas facing students which arose from social and economic changes (eg. unemployment, changing family structure) - ie. the increasing role of the school in welfare work and the fact that schools were ill-equipped for this;

* 41% of staff say they need further assistance with knowledge/skills in assisting student social development;

* 34% of staff say they need further assistance with skills in counselling students;

* 50% of senior staff say they need further assistance with skills in pupil welfare and social development;

* teachers report that their major problem areas are student discipline and behaviour and problems of motivation. Among the student related problems was a smaller number dealing with "relating to and communicating with students";

* most teachers are moderately satisifed with <u>their</u> relationship with students, but less satisfied with students' attitudes to learning and students' discipline in school. About 35% expressed dissatisfaction and only 25% expressed satisfaction with policies on discipline in their school.

Students and Students

We note that 16% of students report problems to do with their adolescent peer group. Peer-group pressure is pervasive and very strong. Recent research in Victorian high school classrooms (Vickers 1982), for instance, reveals the operation of cliques in classes and around the school which can affect students' learning and self-esteem. Those who find school a "successful" experience support the school as an institution: those who are not successful withdraw into some state of apathy and attempt to "hide" themselves in the crowd, or resist. The resistance is directed both against teachers and their fellow students. Peer-group power may be greater than teacher power. "The interactions of pupils in the classroom groups are a more powerful source of reward and punishment than interaction with any single classroom teacher." This system of reward and punishment does not always result in distributive justice. For example "...when mucking around becomes the central bonding activity in a classroom everybody suffers. But the poorest achievers suffer most." In the wider school setting, Vickers comments: "...the organizational structure of the school acts as a lens, magnifying both the advantages of the haves and the disadvantages of the have-nots." An anecdote from the visit of the Review Committee to the School Without Walls is instructive. When asked what were the main differences between SWOW and other high schools there was not only the same general complaint about authoritarianism but also an enlightening distinction of forms of peer-group pressure. "In a normal high school the peer group pressure is negative; it's a them-and-us situation - them against us. To get in with the peer group you have to openly oppose, or at least be apathetic towards the teachers, and the teachers can do little more than keep the lid on. In SWOW we are treated with respect and like adults, and we work with the staff to make agreed rules to run the place. We have our hassles with teachers and amongst ourselves, but we are expected to work out our differences. If you are respected as a person you give it back in turn and you help others in strife just as they help you. That's a positive peer-group pressure." If peer-group pressure can be so powerful how can it be re-directed?

Student Participation in Decisions in Schools

A school submission notes:

> "A sense of involvement in the educational process is perhaps the most significant variable in determining the feelings that students have about their school. A choice of subjects is available in most schools, but once these subjects are selected student input into how the subject is to be dealt with or assessed ends there...The best way to prepare students to cope successfully with the increased and changing demands of a rapidly changing world is to begin by letting them make real decisions - and even real mistakes if need be, about their own learning. This is a general principle and holds true for all students regardless of age. Only when they have the freedom to do this will they be able to begin to take responsibility for themselves and to realize that their actions and behaviour have real results for themselves and others."

Participation starts in the classroom; the core meaning of student participation in schools is the notion of a negotiated curriculum.

It extends into all facets of school life. As one principal submitted:

> "Growth to independence, or the acceptance of adult responsibilities, requires the development of responsible decision making skills and self-confidence and self-awareness. Students can best learn responsible decision making skills by making decisions themselves. Schools should provide an environment which allows students opportunities to decide, from amongst a variety of alternatives, what they should be doing and where and when they should do it. The present rigid timetables and the strict interpretation of custodial responsibility of teachers result in an almost complete absence of the freedom necessary for students to make important decisions for themselves. It almost appears that schools operate to prevent students having opportunities to develop in this way."

How do students view these opportunities? Of the research sample:

* 25% think that students have a real say in the running of the school (65% disagree);

* 60-70% say that students:
  - do not agree with the way the school is run
  - are not consulted about changes in school rules
  - do not believe that 'discipline' is administered fairly
  - do not support staff decisions;

* students are almost equally divided about whether most discipline should be handled by a Student Council (40% agree/40% disagree).

There is some ambiguity in staff opinion. Of the sample:

* 30% of senior staff see 'involvement of students in the corporate affairs of the school' (administration and governance) as 'of major importance' in the running of the school. 18% of these see it as essential;

* 60% see this as 'of moderate importance'

* 10% see it 'of little or no importance'

* 37% of other teachers see involvement of students as 'of major importance';

* 29% of these see it as essential;

* 53% see this as 'of moderate importance';

* 10% see it of little/no importance.

Of a series of issues relating to school organization development, student participation ranked among the lowest in terms of perceived importance and need for further development.

How are High Schools Trying to Respond to Problems of Relationships and the Need for Increased Student Participation?

Essentially high schools are presently torn between two larger demands - to act as academic training institutions and to act as caring institutions. Some quite remarkable programs are being tried in schools to develop the caring role. Special programs on "living skills", or special pastoral care arrangements such as the one where students spend considerable time each day with a designated teacher on a student development program, are being tried in a number of schools. There are some difficulties with such programs; unless they have been negotiated carefully to a point of genuine commitment by a majority of staff, they may be seen as simply appended to, or in conflict with other subjects or activities, and may be accorded lesser status by students. The Review Committee was told by students of courses where the program reality did not match the official school rhetoric. A number of schools are trying to come to grips with the problems of relationships by changing their approach to discipline with approaches based upon contracts like the Glasser method. The concern that teachers have expressed in the research findings for training in counselling and interpersonal skills is noted. The School Counsellors have written major portions of their submission on "professional approaches to increase teacher morale" and suggest opportunities for in-service to develop "teacher self-esteem including communication skills".

In moves to improve the living environment of schools the Review Committee supports the submission that advocates a concerted program of in-service work in this area. If an outcome of the High School Review is a general acceptance by schools and the Authority that it is important to change the climate of relationship in high schools to reduce the alienation of students and to foster the development of self respect and responsible decision making, then an extensive in-service program would be necessary to support the implementation of such a radical innovation.

As the support of principals is necessary for change agents to be effective in schools, and as it is principals who will accept most responsibility for risk taking, a program to present the theoretical basis of, and to engender commitment to, these changes is vital. Principals and other staff members will also need to be trained in the management of innovation, including strategies to attract and involve parents in order that they understand and support the changes.

All staff members need to understand the theoretical bases for these changes and to develop skills in effective communication with students so that they can project the trust, empathy and warmth necessary to implement these changes successfully.

This training would be most effective as a whole school development where the philosophy of relationships can be defined and the changed procedures planned at the same time. This would also provide opportunities for parents to be involved. But to be effective, such training programs need to take place in the context of larger decisions addressed in this report. The first is to do with change and consistent implementation of basic purposes and directions. If high schools are serious about improving relationships as part of an induction into adulthood a useful start is to treat the matter as a curriculum issue. School procedures, starting in the classroom, are not simply the pre-conditions for teaching but are part of it. The teacher-student interactions that these procedures generate are constantly rehearsing and modelling social behaviour; teachers are significant adults and their behaviour is a constant source of learning for students moving to adulthood. What students are struggling to develop is a sense of worth as an individual. As one principal comments in his submission:

> "The key to developing self-confidence and self-esteem in students is the demonstration of respect and trust by the school administration and classroom teachers, that students are worthy people who can be relied upon to do the right thing. It is difficult for students to develop self-respect if they are faced with evidence that they are not trusted. Most school administrators or classroom teachers would profess to respect and trust individual students but their behaviour towards them in mass is often quite the opposite. It is not what they say but what they do that carries the most powerful message."

In-service programs for teachers are not enough in themselves. A school needs a policy on relationships negotitated by the main participants, teachers, students and parents. The concern of the parents for their own relationships with their sons and daughters ought not to be negotiated. "Restoration of nurturance" was argued earlier in this report as one of the social issues of our time and a strong argument for participation. As part of a quite practical approach to this issue, schools should set up collaborative discussions and courses on relationships.

In this process we see Counselling and Guidance resources as being an essential support for teachers, parents and students. This use of counsellors is in line with the findings of the Report of the Review of Guidance and Counselling Services and of our own comments in Chapter 11.

Children with Special Needs

The Committee endorses the general thrust of the Review of Provisions for Children with Special Needs. It accepts the proposition that there are not two populations of children in schools, the able and the disabled, but rather a single population of individual children. Within this single population, there are a number of discrete groups of individuals in terms of individual differences in intellect, personality and physique along a continuum.

We also endorse the corollary that, as far as possible, special needs should be catered for within the mainstream.

We are concerned, though, at the apparent implication of the report that high schools are to give up their entitlement for "slow learner" staff in order to gain the equivalent number of resource teachers in the short term. As the rationale for resource teachers includes their use across the whole range of special needs, both to provide a service and to help remove the stigma of being handicapped, it would appear that the provision for slow learners could be diminished in the short term by the proportion of resource teacher time allocated to other categories of need. In the long term, the need will lessen; with the assistance of resource teachers, classroom teachers increasingly will be able to cope with a continuum of abilities.

Other methods of providing resource personnel could also be considered. In a later chapter we mention the possibility of employing unemployed school leavers or part-time students as "teacher aides", not in the present ancillary sense but as assistant-tutors in classrooms. Peer tuition is well documented as providing support for both the tutor and the tutored. We also suggest the allocation of funds to school boards to employ, not as teachers but as instructors working with teachers, people who have necessary skills to provide for special short or long term needs but who lack teacher training.

Summary

Research in the ACT, as well as in other parts of Australia, shows the existence of a significant level of alienation or disaffection among high school students. While changes in curriculum and methodology, as outlined in Chapter 6, will certainly help to remedy this, it will not do so entirely. Many students raise issues such as unnecessary restrictions, lack of the development of self-respect, and unsatisfactory relations with teachers, peers and parents. They see a need for teachers to treat them as young adults, to be given opportunities to practise self-discipline and to develop responsibility and to participate in negotiations within the school. Teachers and schools are attempting to move in many of these areas but they need support and assistance, particularly through suitable in-service programs.

We recommend that a program should be mounted to present to school principals the theoretical basis of, and to engender their commitment to, these changes and that principals and other staff members should be trained in the management of innovation, and in strategies for the involvement of parents.

We also suggest that a start could be made in the classroom where negotiation could become part of the curriculum (see Chapter 10) and in teacher modelling of respect and trust.

There are significant sections of the school population who for various reasons are thought of as having special needs. We support the present move towards greater mainstream provision for these people and the provision of resource teachers.

We now turn our attention to matters affecting the selection and conditions of service of teachers.

The Commonwealth Teaching Service comprises four "Bands" of teachers. Band 1 consists of classroom teachers, and Band 2 in secondary schools is composed mainly of heads of subject departments, although there are some cases of schools using a Band 2 teacher for administration, welfare, careers, or other roles not associated with specific departments. Assistant Principals of secondary schools are in Band 3, and Principals in Band 4.

Teachers wishing to gain promotion undergo a process of peer assessment to determine eligibility for the Band in question. Having been granted eligibility teachers are not fitted into available positions in order of seniority as in some State systems but must apply for advertised vacancies and be judged for suitability against all other applicants, whether seeking promotion or lateral transfer.

In times of rapid expansion this arrangement made for considerable movement of staff between schools. Now, however, there is very little opportunity for promotion and teachers in Bands 2, 3 and 4 are tending to remain in place for much longer periods. Plainly this can lead to stagnation in particular schools and in the system itself. We believe that the system must take the lead in devising strategies, acceptable to teachers and schools to overcome this problem.

Of major concern, particularly at the Band 2 level, is the influence that the present banding structure has on the programs of schools and on their ability to make major changes. As mentioned above the vast majority of secondary Band 2 positions are tied to particular subject departments. At present among 13 high schools there is a total of 18 Band 2 positions which are either not tied to subjects or which include another component along with subject leadership. It may well be that a major change decided on by a school could involve the amalgamation of subject areas and the consequent re-designation of a particular Band 2 position.

At present the duty statement for a Band 2, 3 or 4 position can be changed only when a vacancy occurs or with the consent of the incumbent. If the incumbent is either unwilling or does not have the necessary skills to make the role change the school can be in the position of having to forego the innovation.

Some schools have already found this policy to be an obstacle to change and we believe that the time is right to consider some less restrictive alternative structure which could be put in place without adverse effect either on those who at present hold promotions positions, or on the career opportunities of those who will follow.

It has been put to us that one answer is to provide more promotion levels along similar lines to the Public Service structure which has 10 levels of salary and responsibility spanning the four CTS band levels:

TABLE 3 – COMPARISON OF ANNUAL SALARY

APS		CTS	
	$	$	
Class 2/3	15 120 – 17 040	16 853	Band 1 – 3 year trained first year of service
Class 4	17 630 – 19 220		
Class 5	19 830 – 21 420		
Class 6	22080 – 23 480		
Class 7	24 250 – 25 610		
		26 334	4 or 5 year trained Eighth year of Service
Class 8	26 800 – 26 850		
Class 9	29 040 – 30 090	28 345	Band 2 (Secondary)
Class 10	31 280 – 32 470	31 861	Band 3 (Secondary)
Class 11	33 720 – 35 130		
Second Division Level 1	40 500	37 896	Band 4 (Secondary)

We do not think that the teaching service lends itself to such a degree of differentation. Classroom teaching means that the same, or similar tasks are performed whether the teacher is Band 1 or Band 4. True, the traditional Band 2 roles could be broken down and distributed among a greater number of teachers. In fact this is often done; the Band 2 teacher then takes on a co-ordinating and supervisory role rather than one of doing all the tasks in person. The various organizational and curriculum tasks are then shared between the Band 1 teachers. In some departments decision making is very much a participatory matter and in others it may be reserved for the Band 2 officer. In all schools there are a number of tasks which fall outside the departmental structure and are usually allotted to Band 1 teachers. Examples which come to mind are Year co-ordinators, various student welfare roles, and responsibility for certain extra-curricular activities. The only recompense which schools can make for these additional tasks is a very inadequate time allocation, and time-table stringencies sometimes make even that impossible.

It can be argued that such tasks could be included into a larger range of promotion classes, but that would have the effect of locking people into particular areas of responsibility. At present the tendency is for responsibilities to be interchanged according to time-table needs, to provide teachers with variety in their work and to provide opportunities for staff development. In addition there are often more transitory jobs which arise for a semester or a year because of a particular need in schools.

A system of "posts of responsibility" allocated within the school for a limited period, and carrying a salary allowance, would appear to provide opportunities for encouraging staff and at the same time for preserving flexibility.

The major problem with such a system is related to superannuation. The Commonwealth Superannuation Scheme which covers teachers as well as public servants calculates pension as a proportion of salary at age of retirement, and salary does not include allowances. Therefore a Band 1 teacher receiving a responsibility allowance rather than a true salary differential would be at a comparative disadvantage on retirement. This disadvantage would be intensified if posts of responsibility were to replace Band 2 positions. One solution which could well be acceptable would be automatic salary progression through the present Band 1-2 salary range with posts of responsibility available throughout the range.

The allocation of posts of responsibility within a school naturally raises the question of who is to decide the allocation. Systems of this type exist in various places with selection being in the hands of the principal, the staff as a whole or some combination of these. We believe that in keeping with the participatory nature of the ACT system a scheme could be developed through which the principal would choose from a panel decided on by the staff as a whole or in the area concerned, or else the staff would choose from a panel nominated by the principal. We do not believe it appropriate for school boards to be involved in these decisions which would be essentially internal matters relating to management rather than policy making. Nor do we see any need for formal procedures of advertisement, application and appeal which would cause delays and interfere with the flexibility of arrangements within the school. The actual entitlement of the school to a particular number of positions would probably be best decided on a points system by which the school could decide the number of positions, their nature and the duration of each occupancy.

If such a proposal is adopted there needs to be clear guidelines to ensure that there is no uncertainty about their duties. We have noticed in our discussions, in the research reports and the reports of the subject consultants, evidence to suggest that there is some ambivalence about the role of Band 2 teachers in high schools. This appears to be present among both Band 1 and Band 2 teachers, with Band 2 teachers in particular suffering some role ambiguity if not role conflict. We believe that it would be appropriate before the staffing review is completed for the role of Band 2 teachers to be clarified. We have gained the impression that there is considerable leadership potential which is not being exercised. We suspect that some of this arises from uncertainty about how leadership, co-ordination and indeed supervision can be exercised in a collegiate rather than hierarchical manner. It is thus another area where some guidance from the Office appears to be necessary. Some in-service activity should be undertaken on an across the schools basis.

The method of staff selection in the ACT has been, and continues to be, a source of friction, particularly between the Schools Authority and the Teachers' Federation. In the early days of the

system school boards were involved and it was claimed that the attitudes displayed by some board members raised such ire among teachers that the Federation took a definite stand against board participation. The Federation was motivated, too, by the belief that appointment of professionals was a matter for professionals.

As a consequence of this, until recently the role of school boards has been limited to the approval of duty statements and to the board chairperson being consulted about the appointment of the principal. The approval of duty statements is now done by the principal, as professional head of the school, except for his or her own duty statement which is approved by the board.

The Chief Education Officer's publicly stated view is that, in present circumstances, boards should be directly involved in the selection of principals who in their capacity as executive members of boards and professional leaders of schools, should have the responsibility for representing their schools' interests in the selection of all other staff.

Currently, the board chairperson is consulted by the Chief Education Officer or his delegate before and after the selection panel's deliberations, and applicants are encouraged to meet the chairperson. It is alleged that some chairpersons have conducted these meetings as formal job interviews and once more the Federation has expressed grave doubts about the procedure.

We believe that, in line with the participatory nature of the system, it is not only perfectly proper but indeed desirable for boards to be involved in the selection of at least the principal and that it is far better that such involvement should be overt and in partnership with the system's professionals and management. The presence of a delegated board member as a full member of the selection panel, we believe, would neither detract from established procedures nor adversely affect the rights of teachers, and it would provide for board involvement in this very significant decision.

Another problem related to staff selection is the lack of opportunities for staff movement between sectors of the service. This lack is felt particularly by high school teachers who would like to move to colleges and who are fully qualified to teach Years 11 and 12. Indeed many have done so in the past. They feel that they will not be fulfilled professionally unless they are given this right. Unfortunately there are very few opportunities for such movement; new positions are not being created and it appears that the majority of college teachers are not willing to move to high schools. It is vital for the morale of high school teachers that they should feel that the opportunity is there. We welcome the recent announcement of the mechanism for job rotation or short-term exchange to help break down the division between high school and college teachers It may be that some measure of compulsion will be necessary; already it is difficult for teachers without college experience to obtain promotion in a college, and vice versa.

We also strongly support the arrangement that will operate from 1984 for teachers to move for a period between the primary and secondary sectors. It is being done, for quite short periods, in connection with Year 6-7 transition activities. No doubt long term movement between these two sectors has implications for in-service and pre-service teacher education and this should be a matter for negotiation between the Authority and teacher training institutions. Greater mobility between sectors is one possible means of providing flexibility in staffing schools at a time of declining and shifting enrolment.

In this connection the Chief Education Officer sees refinements to the selection and appointments process as being of prime importance in an era of equal employment opportunity, tight promotional prospects and reduced mobility, particularly in the light of his stated view that tenure in the Commonwealth Teaching Service ought not to be confused with permanent occupancy of a particular position.

We find ourselves commenting from time to time about the need for increased in-service education in various fields. Among these are the preparation of people for leadership positions, and the provision of refresher courses for those who have attained these positions. We believe that such training can be provided by undertaking higher degrees and through study in teachers' own or the Authority's time, and we consider that opportunities should be provided for those who wish to do so. In addition, however, specific courses, not degree-related, should be available for those who have reached, or have the potential to reach, positions of leadership in schools. Such matters as leadership and personal relations and management skills, system awareness and knowledge of developments in other schools and systems could probably be better developed by well-run short courses, by short-term transfer to the Office, and by interstate and overseas visits or exchanges. We commend the movement which the system has already made in these directions and suggest that every effort be made to facilitate and encourage wider participation.

The lack of mobility and the need for increased study and personal development opportunities are clearly related to the condition known variously as "teacher stress" or "burn-out".

Like many of the topics with which we deal in this report this condition is not restricted to the ACT but it has been well documented in other States and overseas eg. Education News Vol.18 No.3 of March 1983, published by the Commonwealth Department of Education.

It is claimed that the condition occurs in three stages and that it is currently exacerbated by the youth of the Australian teaching force, pressures to upgrade qualifications, rapid social change and a lack of sympathetic understanding on the part of educational administration.

The Committee has no way of accurately assessing the extent either of stress among teachers, nor of teacher burnout in the Australian Capital Territory. It does, however, accept that the problem is a real one among Australian teachers and that it is most unlikely that teachers in the ACT would be any less likely to be subject to the problem than their colleagues in other States. The Teacher Satisfaction Survey carried out as part of our research program shows relatively high levels of dissatisfaction on items which appear to have possible links with stress. In addition, the Authority's officer concerned with staff welfare classes stress as the third most common complaint he has dealt with, and estimates that he has seen about 50 cases in the past twelve months. However, the two more common complaints are classed as "family and personal problems" and "staff related problems", and these have obvious possible inter-relationships with stress, thus making it probable that the true incidence is much higher. It must be emphasized that we only know about those people who have been motivated to seek help.

The ACT Schools Authority has made staff development programs in stress management available, both at school and system level, and these have been well patronized.

The Committee commends this initiative and recommends that it be followed up with a proper assessment of the extent of the problem with a view to taking further remedial action if it is found necessary.

Elsewhere we have discussed the need for a frank public discussion over the allegation of falling standards, and for satisfactory safeguards to be developed which will serve to reassure the critics of schools and teachers, thereby reducing at least one cause of lowered morale and raised stress levels.

It has been suggested that opportunities for teachers to move in and out of part-time work would be of help in stress management, and we agree that this is probably true.

The ACT Teachers' Federation has for some years favoured the introduction of permanent part-time work. It bases its support for this form of employment on the premise that such an arrangement provides a greater variety of employment opportunities to teachers, and at the same time that it enriches the educational objectives of schools and the quality of life of teachers.

Furthermore, it contends that permanent part-time work would be particularly beneficial in the high school sector, as it would provide a degree of flexibility which is presently lacking and would enable smaller schools to retain a wide and diverse curriculum as enrolments decline. Permanent part-time teaching appointments could also enable high schools to increase curriculum variety by offering an increased range of options.

The Federation argues that permanent part-time work should always be optional and that teachers should be able to return to full-time employment at will.

While we would wish to see the option to return to full-time work left open, clearly there are management and financial constraints which would preclude this being a right exercised at will. An appropriate vacancy in entitlement would have to exist at the teacher's school or at another school otherwise "feather-bedding" in the system could result.

The Committee, however, endorses the principle of permanent part-time work and believes that such an arrangement provides opportunities for teachers to gain insights into activities outside of school and to undertake their teaching duties with greater enthusiasm and energy. We feel, though, that care must be taken to safeguard the students, the schools and the system from problems which could arise from undue proliferation of part-time work.

The Committee considers that the absence of permanent part-time work is particularly disadvantageous to those who at present must continue to work full-time or cease work altogether while undertaking parenting duties. An enforced necessity to drop out of the work force also has deleterious effects on career opportunities, as evidenced by the low proportion of women in Band 3 and Band 4 positions in high schools.

We understand that the introduction of permanent part-time work in the Commonwealth Teaching Service is supported by the Schools Authority but that because of implications for the Public Service as a whole the Public Service Board is loath to agree. We believe that working conditions in the Teaching Service are quite different from those that apply in the Public Service and that there is no necessity to retain similarity of provisions.

We strongly urge that permanent part-time work be instituted in the Commonwealth Teaching Service with due safeguards to protect the welfare of students, the schools and the system.

The Committee does not believe, however, that this is the only way in which flexibility in employment can be provided. It considers that there are a number of approaches which provide for teachers to take extended periods of leave. The Canadian scheme whereby teachers are paid four years' salary over five years with one year of leave is one such option.

The Committee takes the view that such arrangements are generally to be supported and recommends that negotiations should be entered into with a view to exploring them.

Quality of the Teaching Service

We have commented in a number of places on the high level of commitment and the general quality of the teaching service in the ACT. At the same time we have suggested a need for some new directions and we have drawn attention to inadequacies in some areas. All parents and students know that the quality of individual teachers is a key element in effective teaching and learning. Parents, teachers, students and administrators share a common concern that all teachers should be competent.

We believe that important components leading to a high level of competence are the selection of students by CAE's, the quality of the courses undertaken, the selection processes leading to employment and in induction into the teaching service. We are concerned that, in spite of a staffing allowance of 0.2 being provided for beginning teachers, at least for those commencing at the start of a school year, insufficient attention is given to induction processes. We understand that this is a particular difficulty, when the number of teachers in a subject department is small. This appears to us to be another instance where co-operation between schools and a more flexible use of master teachers could be an advantage. A further stage in 'quality control' is in the assessment of a beginning teacher's period of probation. This is a critical decision and we believe that if there are any doubts, it is the future of children which should be the paramount consideration.

The principal of a school has a major responsibility for improving the quality of the teaching within a school. So too do other senior staff. Teachers at all levels have a professional responsibility to strive for excellence in their work. System assistance is provided through in-service courses and the work of consultants.

In spite of the best endeavours of all concerned, circumstances arise in all education systems when a teacher shows signs of being temperamentally unsuited, of lacking competence, allowing performance to slip below acceptable standards, or of being in need of a change of work location. These circumstances should not, in the interests of all, be ignored and a range of remedial and counselling procedures must be available. In the event of such measures being unsuccessful, it is the clear professional responsibility of the principal, following due process, to initiate action which will require the Chief Education Officer to make a decision on such a teacher's future career. If a principal fails to accept this responsibility, the Committee believes that it is not only within the province of the school board to raise the matter with the principal but indeed an obligation to do so and to expect that appropriate action will be taken. We do not believe however that it is the role of the school board to engage itself with the specifics of the alleged incompetence or unsuitability of individual teachers.

The damage that can be done to the educational opportunities of students who are exposed to incompetent teachers is incalculable. We recognize the difficulties in addressing this problem but believe that it is one which must be faced, no matter how few such instances as these may be.

Summary

One possible result of lack of expansion in an education system is stagnation caused by people remaining for long periods in one position.

We recommend that the system should take the lead in devising strategies for avoiding such stagnation, particularly at the key Band 2 level.

The Band 2 role seems to be improperly understood and needs clarification. One strategy for avoiding stagnation is the creation of school-based posts of responsibility. There are difficulties with the implementation of the proposal, but we recommend that in conjunction with the forthcoming staffing review, the possibility of Posts of Responsibility should be thoroughly investigated.

In keeping with our thrust towards greater participation of all sections of the school community we believe that the time has come for school boards to be directly represented on selection panels, at least in the selection of principals.

Teacher morale and the associated phenomena of stress and burnout merit close attention. Such measures as job rotation, short or long term, between sectors, and particularly between high schools and colleges; increased opportunities for higher study and in-service education specifically related to school tasks; permanent part-time work, and extended leave arrangements are all supported as ways of overcoming these problems.

We recommend that a proper assessment be made of the problems of low morale and high stress, and that appropriate remedial action be taken.

We also recommend that the Public Service Board be urged to permit permanent part-time work in the teaching service, and that schemes for allowing extended leave should be refined with the welfare of students, teachers and the system in mind.

The Committee has been impressed by the commitment and high quality of the teaching service, but recognizes that new directions are required and that in any service there will be some inadequacies. Greater attention should be given to the induction of new teachers. The responsibility for ensuring the high quality of the service rests with principals and other senior staff, with system support.

In Chapter 10 we return to the matter of relationships between the various groups within the school community and the ways in which collaborative action can be secured.

Chapter 10 Making Decisions on High School Curriculum

In foregoing chapters we have indicated our belief that there does appear to be a considerable degree of national consensus on the sort of curriculum that high schools should be offering. This curriculum should ensure that all students are well grounded in the basic skills, gain the knowledge and skills that will enable them to take their places as responsible members of society and the world of work, and provide the basic learnings for further study or vocational training. This formal teaching should take place in a caring, but disciplined environment in which students are given opportunities to develop self-confidence, self-discipline and social skills.

We have also suggested that in ACT high schools these hopes are generally not being realized, even though they figure in various ways in statements of system and school aims.

The major constraints preventing a full realization of aims, as far as we have been able to determine, lie in schools' perceptions of parent and general community expectations, and in the strongly subject oriented training of teachers and organization of schools. It is clear from our conversations with students, teachers and concerned parents that there is a real desire for change. As we have said in Chapter 6, the research conducted among Year 6 parents indicated a concern about job futures and competitive social pressures, but also a desire for caring discipline and important social values.

The research conducted among students shows a similar set of desires. One of the researchers has summed up the results in the following way:

> "It seems that all the students feel they should be made to work hard, but they need to see a purpose in what they are asked to do, and they think there should be a greater choice both between and within subjects to enable them to tailor their schooling to what they see as relevant and interesting to themselves. At the same time, they want more experience of self-discipline. They are happy to have high demands or expectations placed on them, but they want to be given more responsibility for meeting those. They also want to learn more about the outside world, or 'society', more 'practical' skills and many want earlier and more thorough career education. Finally, a number of students want to be given the chance to participate more in the running of the school.
>
> All students want the teacher-student relationships to be improved, and teaching methods to be more appropriate to the learning abilities of the students, more varied and interesting. Overall, students want the school to be a more caring and harmonious environment with acceptance of difference, respect and fair treatment for all."

The teacher research referred to in Chapter 6 shows that many teachers are concerned with similar issues to those expressed by students, even though they naturally view them from a different perspective. The survey of teachers' needs in staff development shows again an awareness that the concerns expressed by students are really important.

Over 40% of teachers said that it was essential for them to have further assistance with skills in catering for children with learning difficulties or developmental difficulties, skills in remedial education and in teaching children with special talents, knowledge of recent development in their area of specialization, and knowledge and skills in assisting student social development. Between 30-40% want further help with development of skills in classroom management and control, knowledge of other education programs in operation relevant to their own teaching area, knowledge about education media and technology, and skills in counselling students.

Incidentally, unlike a recent letter writer to "The Canberra Times", the members of this Review Committee do not see an expression of staff development needs as a sign of weakness but of strength. Changing circumstances require change of approaches and the acquisition of new knowledge and skills. We will take this matter up later in the report.

To return to the matter in hand, we find that parents, students and teachers, while probably not saying exactly the same things, hold sufficiently similar views to make intelligent dialogue and concerted action a possibility. It is sad that for many years each group has found it difficult to cross the apparent gap which separates them.

Although the ACT system emphasizes curriculum development at the school level with participation by staff, parents and students, there has in fact been little development beyond a purely formal level of involvement by any of these parties.

The evidence we have seen and heard convinces us that the process has begun, has been encouraged through existing participative structures and is the intent of many of the documents we have read. Nevertheless there is widespread disappointment and some frustration at the low level of participation and at the effectiveness of current processes in achieving the aims for which the structures were developed.

As far as generalizations can be made about ACT schools the pattern of participation in curriculum decision making follows the "Guidelines on Relationships". Developments are initiated at staff level, pass through some internal processes and are then passed to the board which, with a few exceptions, is essentially a reactive body. Parent and student participation is usually limited to the input that their representatives can make at board meetings, or that can be made by the few who attend school planning conferences.

Staff participation, of course, is more easily obtained and has been more fully developed. Even so it still appears to be on a somewhat limited scale in a number of schools.

Most schools have curriculum committees composed of Band 2 teachers or of elected departmental representatives. No doubt this structure was chosen in order to ensure school-wide participation through a representative model. In practice, though, as is common in representative structures, it appears to have strengthened territoriality, curriculum meetings often developing into horse-trading between departments over time allocation and class sizes. It has been put to us that in such negotiations "unmastered" departments can be at a serious disadvantage. In general such curriculum committees and/or staff meetings limit themselves to consideration of the overall program of the school, leaving the content, methodology and assessment of particular subjects to be dealt with at department level.

As we have shown in previous chapters it is these areas of content, methodology and assessment that warrant close scrutiny by the whole school community working from a basis of firm commitment to established system and school goals. The established departmental structure in schools has demonstrated its unsuitability for this overall task, a fact which was remarked upon by the interstate curriculum consultants.

Competition Between Subjects

The concern of these consultants was primarily to report on their subjects, but they were also asked to look at how each subject related to others in the total curriculum. Many of them remarked on the rigidity and territoriality of the subject department structure, and their perception varied with the status that they found to be accorded their subject.

Thus the History consultant remarked on History's "... secure position in Year 7" where the enthusiasm of the subject's teachers "... is seen as competition against other subject offerings, not altogether a healthy practice, but one that is typical of the survival syndrome that marks a smaller faculty belonging in a small education system". It also suggests, however, that "... History cannot afford to ignore the multi-disciplinary advantage of its being... there needs to be some attention given to other subject specialist areas and to the contribution all other faculties can bring to History and vice versa". Other subjects are vastly more threatened. The debate on total curriculum, some consultants suggested, was not genuinely in terms of students' needs and expectations, but in most high schools was a "power play" between various subject departments in which the "strong" subjects (the so-called "basics" or "core" subjects) were awarded greatest esteem while the weak subjects (notably the "practical" or "elective" subjects) were accorded less. An example was quoted by the Art

consultant of a school where the total diet of Art for a student could consist of a few periods per week for one semester in the four years of high school. He suggests that the position is deteriorating: "the 1978 ACT Schools Authority policy statement on 'Education and the Arts' referred to a yawning gap between the claims made by those in the educational community on the benefits of the arts on the one hand and the attention actively being paid to them on the other. It must be acknowledged that since 1978 the position has deteriorated even further. The gap is now a chasm!" Art is squeezed by the dominance of academic thinkers on staffs and boards, and Art teachers are isolated and under-resourced. In a supposedly art-conscious city, why is Art in high schools so poor? In more general terms, the Social Science consultant remarks that "... the widespread practice in many schools of placing special value on so-called academic subjects makes it difficult to offer to all students a well-rounded general education. Recognition must be given to the fact that many experiences - social, aesthetic, spiritual, emotional as well as intellectual, contribute to the education of every student."

We agree that the present system frequently results, in practice, in increasingly highly academic, subject oriented courses on the one hand, and highly idiosyncratic courses based on the interests of particular teachers on the other hand. They are frequently not consonant with school expressed aims, as has been observed by our interstate consultants, and the process certainly limits participation of parents, students and Band 1 teachers. This tendency was also observed by Cohen and Harrison (1978) in a national survey.

Purpose and Practice

If the purpose of high school education is narrowly instrumental, as it appears to be perceived by numbers of students and parents and by some teachers (Meade 1981, Anderson 1980) or as individually developmental, as perceived by some students and parents and most teachers, then the courses developed by the present process may well be appropriate.

If, on the other hand, the purpose is more attuned to the needs of the individual in society (Martin 1981, Schools Commission 1980, Curriculum Development Centre 1980), and if the system and the schools really value student, teacher and parent participation, then a very different process should be adopted. This question has a parallel in a very interesting study of English comprehensive schools (Hargreaves 1982). In a discussion of curriculum the following point is made:

> "I believe, though curriculum theorists may find the judgement harsh, that too much of this development work ... took too much of the present selected content and structure of the present curriculum as unquestioned and unquestionable. ...The cardinal error, I submit was to see most curriculum reform in terms of subjects and to organise curriculum development among teachers committed to the same subject."

Negotiated Curriculum

A more appropriate method of work would appear to be to lay out before the curriculum developers, the school's aims as previously established by a participatory process, to examine the content and methodology of the proposed curriculum in the light of these aims, to identify other content and methodologies that might be useful and finally to rearrange the content into subject areas. In the process, of course, some of the aims might be modified. This negotiation should involve all sections of the school, it should be non-threatening to established departments and, hopefully, it would result in a curriculum that was attuned to student needs, rather than a traditional core with additional sections added subsequently. Such a method could also take into account, much more effectively than present processes, such models as the CDC Core Curriculum and the "Curriculum Areas" set out in the green paper.

The development of a curriculum in this way would not be easy nor quick, but it would be a developmental process giving a sense of ownership which, we suggest, is not felt by any section of the school communities at present.

It would also need to be a continuing process. One of the problems with negotiation of curriculum, rules, etc in schools is that the negotiation stops when the product is published. As a result future generations, which arrive very quickly in schools, do not see the product as the result of negotiation but as a given into which they have had no input.

The role of students in such negotiation is significant. They certainly want a say and should be consulted, but there are, obviously, limits to their understanding of their own needs, as opposed to wants, and of the opportunities for schools to meet those needs.

Certainly there does seem to be room for involvement at the classroom level. If the syllabuses of individual subjects are left flexible it is possible for teacher and class, or even teacher and individuals, to decide what options are to be taken and in what way. Such a method would help to satisfy one dimension of the student need for involvement and should do away

with the type of complaint, which we have heard from students, that when they ask why they have to study a particular topic they are told ..."Because it's in the course and I can't alter it". Students in the surveys clearly identified their desire for such options.

Negotiation of this type, which is common in adult education, becomes, in fact, part of the curriculum: a learning experience in decision making and the development of responsibility.

Parents can similarly be reached through discussions of particular concerns which they see as important. Through negotiation over their own child's learning, behaviour and special needs they can gain a greater appreciation of the needs of children in general and of the ways in which the entire school community can move to cater for those needs.

This type of negotiation should not be threatening to any group or individual. Too often we see in schools a situation where teachers and parents seem to be afraid to approach each other with confidence. It is a truism to say that the education of children should be a partnership between the home and the school, and yet it often seems to be a partnership without real knowledge of what each partner is about. Parents and teachers tend to have different perceptions of children, not only because they have a different relationship with the children but because the latter present themselves in different lights to different audiences. True discussion will give each party a much more rounded picture of the children and of each other. Many teachers can tell of a disruptive student who suddenly develops new interest and motivation through the discovery by a teacher of a hobby or interest which can be used as a bridge to develop a new relationship which in turn greatly improves attitudes and school participation.

Someone of course has to take the initiative and move to break down the barriers. It seems to us that the first move should come from teachers. They are the professionals, who are seen to be in possession of the school. Parents, on the other hand, are often very uncertain about approaching schools, both as buildings and institutions, for some have, in the past, been made to feel unwelcome.

During her recent visit to this country, Joan Sallis made the suggestion that such initiatives should be on the basis of contact with individuals or small groups having similar interests rather than with a school's whole parent body. She instanced the parents of Year 7 students early in the year as being a particularly suitable group. Some Canberra schools have made such approaches with good results but they have not always made the contacts lasting. Action by committed parents is needed to maintain the contact and to develop parent groups into real educational bodies.

With the establishment of school boards in Canberra the Parents' and Citizens' Associations have lost much of their educational focus, and they have tended to revert to rather meek fund-raising bodies. If the P&C's are to be revitalized there must be a realization that they can provide an accessible electoral base for board members, and a forum for developing and assessing parent opinion. Joan Sallis commented that many parent organizations, not only in Australia, have developed a "closed shop" atmosphere which quite unintentionally freezes out the uninitiated. Meetings often inhibit real discussion by unnecessarily formal procedures which deter many people from attending. Previously a powerful incentive for discussion on curriculum was provided by the need for P & C's to make decisions on the expenditure of voluntary contributions on equipment and resources. These funds now most often become part of school budgets. While this is sensible, the P & C loses the power to decide on how they are to be used in favour of the school board (on which of course, parents and citizens are represented).

If dialogue can be achieved between parents, teachers and students on a basis of individual or small group concerns then the way should be clear to extend the negotiation into a real debate on educational purpose and practice. This debate also can be non-threatening if approached with the expectation that the groups are seeking power with, rather than power over others.

There are signs of a growing awareness of the need to open up discussion. One high school which we visited was adopting a practice of inviting selected parents to take part in the curriculum development process before the proposal reached board level, a process which, it was hoped, would lead to greater parent participation overall.

At another high school members of the Review Committee attended a planning conference which was notable for a comparatively good attendance of students and for a call from a student for combined staff-student action to turn the rhetoric of student participation into reality. Following this a staff-student committee was set up which decided to change the electoral base of the Student Council. Members were subsequently elected from Social Science classes, rather than from whole-year groups as previously, and provision has been made for Social Science classes to be used for feedback and discussion of issues. The Principal reports that elections were much more strongly contested and students appeared to be more thoughtful in their choice. A further result is that the Student Council is becoming more involved in policy issues. Students have confirmed that "the SRC is better this year". If this experiment succeeds it will create a process in marked contrast to that which the Committee has been told of in other school visits and during our meeting with student representatives. The general impression we gained in these cases was that students knew very little about boards and student councils, and that they felt that the latter were either completely tokenistic or at best merely social committees.

If participation in curriculum development, or any other aspect of decision making, is to be productive it must take place throughout the process. To place a fait accompli before a staff, student or parent meeting is to deny participation and turn the meeting into a rubber stamp. Representatives of all groups must have real input into formulating the proposal, and have opportunities for discussion with their electorate throughout the negotiation. In this way the electorate can discuss the final proposal from a properly informed basis, and with a full understanding of all points of view.

The danger of proceeding in educational change without proper community involvement is graphically illustrated by the case of the William Tyndale School in London. The staff of that school introduced new practices without keeping the community informed. The resultant wrangling became embroiled with party politics, was taken up by the press, and became a national cause celebre. In the process the reputations of the school and many of the participants were badly tarnished and the students paid a very high price indeed.

In the ACT system, because of its devolved nature, and the absence of hierarchical accountability structures, it is most important that curriculum be seen to be thoroughly validated. One method of achieving this would be the involvement, throughout the development process, of teachers from other schools, consultants, or people from other systems. Obviously the degree of this type of participation would vary according to whether the development was a single course or a major program. In many cases this involvement could appropriately include people from primary schools or colleges so that due regard could be paid to inter-sectoral integration.

It is clear to us that the system is ready for this type of consultative process. It is already happening informally in a number of areas, and the ready acceptance of so-called "regional board meetings" indicates that more formal procedures of a non-centralist kind would be well received.

We favour the development, based on the beginnings that have already been made, of what we shall call Local Education Networks. We use this term to avoid the connotations that "educational region" carries in Australian education. Such a structure, like the present "regional boards", would comprise a college with its feeder high schools, and their feeder primary schools. Together with the pre-schools, it could develop into a strong support base for the schools in the area, disseminating information, providing a public forum and arranging resource sharing as well as program validation and articulation. Useful links could also be established with non-state schools in the area.

The networks should be established with minimum support staff. Rather, an assistant-principal in each school should be the contact person, with one of them appointed as convenor. It may be necessary to provide extra clerical support for the convenor's school. We advocate this, because we do not wish to propose a bureaucratic layer between the Authority and the schools. The use of assistant-principals as the key personnel is suggested because this appears to be an appropriate level for the task. Nor are we suggesting that the LEN committees should develop into a series of A-P's meetings. The major task of the networks we see would be to involve the total communities of all the schools in collaborative action and discussion on appropriate issues and projects.

This apparatus would be a simple and effective method of dealing with problems of transition between schools. Specifically, we have been given evidence of difficulties in transition between primary and high schools. Some mature students find they come from primary schools where they have established a healthy relationship with teachers only to find that, because of a lack of awareness on the part of their new school, this is replaced by another far less satisfactory one which leaves them with feelings of frustration and anger. It should also be said that some especially commendable work is done to ensure that this problem is avoided.

In the same way we have heard of both successes and failures in arranging for students whose level of attainment and maturity suggest that they could move into high schools or colleges in the course of a school year rather than to be required to wait for the new year to begin. We believe that this kind of flexibility is to be encouraged and that it can best be handled on the basis of negotiations between parents and schools through the machinery of the kind we have suggested.

They might also serve as a useful forum to discuss the local impact of a proposed non-government school. Possibilities for new or shared facilities, the planning implications for the proposed and existing schools are all matters which can best be discussed in a local setting.

An ongoing task for the LENs, for the individual school communities, and for the Authority and its staff, must be the establishment and maintenance of curriculum guidelines and purpose statements. We have spoken several times of the need for a truly participative approach to the setting of aims and developing curriculum. The original "Guidelines on Relationships Within the System" and the recent "Future Directions in Curriculum" make similar references. One of the major problems of high schools, as we have said has been that the individual schools were left alone to perform these vital tasks, the major thrust of early system leadership having been towards the establishment of the colleges.

But, whatever local and school based machinery exists, or develops it is vital for the continued health of the system and of the schools that clear understandings on purpose and well-founded broad curriculum guidelines be determined and promulgated for the whole system, but particularly for the high school sector.

Unlike the authors of some of the submissions we have received and the writer of a recent letter to "The Canberra Times", we do not believe that curriculum re-centralization is the path to take in this devolved system. This would be a response predicated on the assumption that only bureaucratic or authoritarian structures are systematic and efficient. We suspect, as must a goodly proportion of the Canberra population, that bureaucracies can be incredibly inefficient.

Rather, we take the view that participative structures can be systematic, and that, because they share responsibility for solving problems they can generate a will to succeed which leads to efficacious action. The success of a number of government and non-government schools demonstrates this.

In this activity the lead must be taken by the Authority but, consistent with the philosophy of the system, it must be planned in close consultation with representatives of the various interest groups. It is not the place of this Committee to pre-empt system planning but we have drafted this model for consideration and discussion.

The Authority would react to our report by establishing a representative response group, preferably under the leadership of an educationist. The first task of this group would be to study this report and derive from it a draft list of key issues.

A statement setting out the key issues would be discussed with parent groups, teachers and students and the planning group. Each school board would then respond to the planning group, by suggesting modifications to the list. The resultant re-drafted set of issues would become the basis of a thorough community survey and discussion.

Each school board would be responsible for the generation of a discussion process which would involve the greatest number of students, teachers and parents, not as separate groups, but together as the school community. There is of course no right or wrong way for achieving such a result but one model which has proved successful in communities in Canberra and in Victoria is the use of neighbourhood meetings involving small groups of families plus a smaller number of teachers.

This discussion process would generate views of how schools could best respond to the issues. Each school's collated views, including disagreements as well as agreements would then become the basis for a set of system recommendations to be submitted back to schools and to the Authority.

Such a process would take considerable time and a great deal of commitment and hard work, but it would generate a community response to the needs of the schools. Something very similar has worked among the 200 high schools in Victoria. Can it work among the 17 high schools of the ACT?

Obviously, such a consultative process cannot be expected to provide the details of curriculum guidelines, nor could the LENs achieve a system document, although we would expect that they would play a vital part in the drafting process.

In order to co-ordinate the curriculum guidelines, assist schools with their own deliberations on implementation and provide information on curriculum materials, we believe that it is time to take up the suggestion contained in Recommendation 12 of the Campbell Report:

> "That a Curriculum Advisory Board .... be appointed .... to form part of the Education Authority, and to scrutinise, evaluate and adopt curriculum material, to advise schools and colleges on curricular processes and implementation, and to advise on in-service training in the curriculum field."

We do not agree with the membership suggested in the original recommendation but we endorse the concept of including full time curriculum experts along with the fullest possible representation of schools.

As well as the major task of drafting, in consultation with LENs and schools, major guideline documents, the Board should have the task of focussing system attention on new curriculum needs and keeping the system aware of curriculum movements elsewhere.

Core Curriculum

By establishing the Curriculum Advisory Board as a structure incorporating school representation and outside of the normal Authority standing committee membership we believe that it would not be seen as a higher authority passing down instructions. Such a structure is assumed in many of the suggestions that we have been given regarding machinery to provide system guidelines.

Very often these suggestions have included a call for a core curriculum. The first problem here is one of definition, because the word "core" is commonly used in at least three different senses.

Most people would probably define the word as meaning a group of subjects common to all students either within a school or across a system. It is clearly necessary to be absolutely certain which of these two is meant. The problem, however, does not end there. The Curriculum Development Centre, among others, used the term "core curriculum" quite differently as a set of experiences and learnings, distinct from subjects, which are considered necessary for all students.

The definition which applies at present to ACT schools is a group of subjects common to all students within a school. The group always includes English (in one school as a component of Humanities), Mathematics and usually Science with various other additions such as Social Studies, History and Physical Education in some schools. This type of core has been criticized in some submissions as not being uniform across the system: "How do we know that Mathematics at School A is the same as at School B?"

The people who make this criticism usually go on to suggest that the core should be a group of subjects common to all schools with the content either fully prescribed or with a prescribed minimum content. They sometimes add, "as in New South Wales". The McGowan Report, referred to elsewhere, makes it clear that actual New South Wales practice has moved considerably from that which these people remember. The call for such a common core is often accompanied by a request for system-wide examination or testing, again "as in New South Wales", and again in ignorance of the fact that New South Wales has moved away from such testing and appears to be in the process of moving even further in the direction that the ACT has taken.

In fact, no system in Australia now has external examination below Year 12 level and even at that stage moves are being introduced to bring assessment back into the schools. Further, it is our understanding that no system has centrally prescribed curricula at Year 10 level.

To remove from schools the necessity to develop their own curricula, would mean also the removal of an opportunity for teachers, parents, and perhaps also students, to work co-operatively at a very fundamental level in the education of children. At a time when much is heard about the rights of parents to choose and to be involved in their children's education it is strange to hear arguments suggesting that decision making should be restored to a bureaucratic level far removed from both parents and teachers.

The problems associated with external testing have been well documented by, among many others, Little in Canberra and Rechter in Victoria. From the curriculum point of view the main disadvantage of such testing is that teaching becomes centred on probable test items and that minimum content quickly becomes the main content; teachers are wary of moving too far away from the examination content for fear of disadvantaging students. We have referred in more detail to the problem of assessment in Chapter 7.

The Curriculum Development Centre's core follows quite different lines. A similar concept is also contained in the Schools Authority's green paper. The use of this model would involve the school in a thorough re-examination of its aims and curriculum, not as has usually been done in the past, using the established subject departments as a starting point. Rather, it would be necessary to decide the actual items within the core curriculum categories, and the methodologies which would lead to the

attainment of the aims. These items would then have to be allocated into departmental packages and expanded into teaching programs. In the process some elements of existing programs might be retained, some dropped completely, some transferred to other departments and some would become parts of inter-departmental packages.

The process would be slow and would demand very open discussion between all sections of the school; but it would be exciting and rewarding. It would also be difficult and it would probably require skills beyond those possessed by the participants. The school should not shrink from involving outsiders and from demanding that the system make resources of personnel, time and money available.

Such system commitment would be vital when it came time to consider the implications of curriculum change at the primary/high and high/college interfaces. It is essential that no section of the system should develop its curriculum in complete isolation from the others. We cannot believe that the Campbell Report recommendation "that the high school curriculum be complete in itself" really meant that it should be developed without taking cognizance of what was happening in adjoining sectors. The Local Education Networks, discussed in detail earlier would provide a means for this type of consultation.

Accountability and Responsibility in Curriculum

Throughout its meetings with professional and parent groups, and reflected in many of the submissions, the Committee detected a note of ambivalence about the role of the ACT Schools Authority in curriculum matters. There are those who wish it to operate in a manner historically associated with State Education Departments in the past. It should be directive, set goals and priorities, allocate resources and ensure that certain arbitrary standards are met.

On the other hand there was a majority who maintained that the task of the Authority should remain that of setting broad guidelines, reacting to the wishes of schools, providing resources and skills to assist boards and teachers to devise and implement their educational programs and to act as a liaison between all those involved in education.

The Committee reminds the former group of commentators that the administrative style that they associated with State Education Departments is largely a thing of the past. State Education Departments are now generally much more responsive to the needs and wishes of local communities. Most States have some form of regionalized administration and school board structures. Some have a State Commission, a State Board or some form of machinery to provide a platform for parent and community participation. All States have parent bodies which have an impact upon decision making, and these bodies of course have a national voice.

The Committee strongly endorses the current machinery for administering education in the ACT and believes that the general principle upon which it is based is sound. Schools should make their own decisions about all matters which concern students.

The Schools Authority, however, quite clearly has responsibilities to ensure that schools are operating in the best interests of their students and their communities. In delegating major responsibilities to school boards, the Authority does not abrogate its responsibilities in this area. It maintains a responsibility to monitor the system and the schools in the system. It can do this in a number of ways. One way is to monitor the levels of student achievement. As we have said, we believe that the information gained in this process is not likely to affect outcomes in schools. We believe that the resources needed would be used more effectively in assisting schools to review their approaches to student assessment in the school. A second approach is to require individual high schools to undergo external evaluations or reviews. We believe that this approach, while providing some information to the Authority, would be unlikely to effect change in the schools reviewed. Furthermore, it would be contrary to the basic philosophy which underlies a devolved-participative system.

One model which the Committee finds attractive in that it would ensure both system accountability and benefit to the individual schools is the review process which has been developed in Victoria, and has been incorporated in the broader School Improvement Programme. It is also being used in the case of twelve small primary schools in the ACT which are experiencing further enrolment decline.

This approach provides for a regular and cyclical review of all schools by a group of people which should include a staff representative, a parent, a nominee of the Authority and such other people as the school feels competent to comment upon its educational program.

The review should follow the findings of an internal evaluation and it should be provided to the school board for follow up action and future planning over the subsequent cycle.

The review should be flexible enough to allow for it to be undertaken in a variety of ways.

The internal evaluation process has already developed in the ACT from an informal activity to a more formalized but not mandatory activity except in the case of small schools with declining enrolments. The position paper School Based Evaluation in ACT Government Schools noted that "the practice of school based evaluation has been fostered and developed in ACT schools since 1976". This was formalized in the following position endorsed by the Authority in 1981:

"1. The Authority recognises the value and necessity of school-based evaluation, and encourages all schools to build school-based evaluations into their regular activities.

2. The Authority endorses the following principles:

* school-based evaluation is the evaluation of all or part of the school's operations, by schools and for schools with the principal purpose of school improvement. It is recognized that it is only one form of evaluation that must be undertaken in the school system;

* school-based evaluation is a collaborative effort to be undertaken by teachers, parents, students, relevant members of the school community and the school board; and supported by the Authority;

* school-based evaluation is initiated and controlled at the school level in accordance with the Authority's policy on devolution of school-based decision making, but will be facilitated by the Authority through the Schools Office;

* school boards are to determine the policy of the school in relation to school evaluation, and teachers at the school will have a key role in decision making about evaluation since they have the professional responsibility for implementing recommendations for improvement."

The Committee considers this position paper to be a particularly valuable one in an area where there is often a great deal of confused thinking. For example the paper distinguishes between

" (i) National evaluation where, for example, the AEC for accountability purposes commissions tests of literacy and numeracy.

(ii) System-wide evaluation where the Authority needs to satisfy itself that its individual schools are operating in the best interests of their communities and in particular of students. The Authority needs, therefore, to monitor schools. Examples of such monitoring have been the review of the Accrediting Agency; the review of primary education and various system level evaluation projects.

(iii) School evaluation, where the major purpose is school improvement with some elements of accountability.....

(iv) Student evaluation where the main purposes are diagnosis, remediation and extension of student learning....."

The paper defines evaluation as "the formal process of collecting information to provide a structured basis for judgements and decision-making for improvement".

We have used the term student assessment instead of student evaluation.

In formulating its policy on school evaluation, the Authority has endorsed the concept of school based evaluation as "the evaluation of schools, of curricula and of educational programs by schools and for schools. Decisions on the basis of evaluative information are at the level of the individual school rather than by some external agency or inspectorate. The basic purpose of school based evaluation is for school improvement. Other purposes might be to satisfy school boards that their policies are being implemented. Curriculum evaluation prior to re-registration of courses in high schools; evaluation of courses prior to re-accreditation in college; and to assist schools in reporting to their communities and to the Authority".

Within the broad framework of evaluation described in the position paper, the Committee considers that, insofar as high schools are concerned, this approach to school based evaluation provides a potentially effective means of curriculum renewal and school improvement generally.

In High School Education Program Guidelines 1980, evaluation of the education program is included as one of the components which could be included in the preparation and presentation of the program for approval. Inspection of documents approved indicate, however, that much of the evaluation described is in general terms and frequently refers to ongoing informal evaluation rather than the more formal and rigorous approach which we are suggesting should be incorporated.

Few schools have the resources or the enterprise to be able to engage in school based evaluation activities without external support. The Committee has been impressed by the evaluation and research support provided to schools, within the limits of the resources made available. The Committee is encouraged by the increasing interest being shown by some high schools in evaluating aspects of the school program. As we have indicated elsewhere, we believe that the further development of the ACT system as a devolved-participative system is dependent on the willingness of schools - school boards, principals and teachers - to accept responsibility for the outcomes of the schooling they provide. This cannot be met without an ongoing program of evaluation.

Movement in this direction is a developmental process but activity at the moment is somewhat ad hoc. We believe that high schools which do not enter into this arena are particularly vulnerable. The Committee believes that, as a result of the experience which has been gained since the system was first established, and the expectations which the educational community now has about evaluation, it would be appropriate if the responsibilities of school boards included a specific reference to course and program evaluation.

We recognize, however, that there are real limitations on what schools can undertake and what system support can be provided unless additional resources are made available. The use of pupil-free days is one approach, requiring community co-operation, but in any case in our view this is not a sound one. Another approach is to build-in an evaluation allowance in the staffing formula. There is a danger, however, that such an allowance would be absorbed. In any case, the level of demand will vary. The Committee considers therefore, that it would be more appropriate if adequate provision were made in the System Needs Pool for relief staff to be engaged to meet the school board approved evaluation plan. Allied with this would be a need for additional staff to advise schools on evaluation processes.

The Committee has the impression that most school based evaluations which have occurred have interpreted "school" as teaching staff. This may well be an important development phase. We believe that in the longer term, most, if not all school based evaluations should interpret school in the broad sense used in "Guidelines on Relationships within the Education System" viz "to include the relevant group of pupils, staff and parents forming an entity which finds expression through the School Board and its executive officer, the principal of the school".

> "If the community does not share in the process of evaluation at the school level, it will still make its own evaluation on grounds and information which may be inadequate or inappropriate. ... The short-sightedness of evaluation programs which exclude parents/community or allow only a token role should be self-evident. The evaluation will still take place and be expressed from the outside in criticism, hostility and media pressure on schools." (Blakers 1982).

There seems to be no valid argument against following up the evaluation phase with a review group such as we have outlined earlier. Such action would give further validation to the school process and it would also provide a means for the Authority to carry out its responsibility under the Ordinance "to ensure that adequate provision is made for persons attending, or seeking to attend, pre-schools and schools conducted by the Authority".

We have indicated elsewhere that, while endorsing the processes of school based curriculum development, we believe that this would be more effective if there were a greater level of co-operative effort between schools in developing courses. Furthermore, we believe that there is more scope for support in these areas from the Authority itself. We believe that this can be achieved without infringing on the professional responsibilities of teachers or on those responsibilities delegated to school boards. We further believe that there will be occasions when it would assist schools if a system-wide evaluation of a particular subject area were carried out. This process is quite distinct from either monitoring of student achievement or review of schools. Given the responsibilities of individual schools in curriculum development, such a system-wide contribution would only be productive if approached in a fully collaborative manner.

System Monitoring

The Authority also has a responsibility to monitor other aspects of the operation of the system. The Authority's record in this area is second to none. This Review is an example. We are aware also of recent reviews of varying sorts into staffing, special needs, primary schools, colleges, pre-schools, curriculum in small schools, guidance and counselling.

One further aspect warrants comment. The Authority, in delegating major responsibilities to school boards, including, if our recommendation is accepted, a more clearly defined responsibility for school evaluation and review, nevertheless retains a reserve power. This power enables the Authority to intervene if it considers that a board is not carrying out its responsibilities or if the Authority considers that intervention is in the best interests of all students and the community.

The Committee sees a need for machinery which is designed to ensure that if at any time a school fails to meet the needs of a community, early and effective intervention can be relied upon. There are many examples of such cases both in Australia and elsewhere but perhaps the most celebrated is that of the William Tyndale School in London to which we have referred earlier. This serves as a warning to schools, administrators and policy makers in all devolved systems.

There are bound to be occasions when a school board or a principal acts unwisely. In such instances we believe that the Schools Authority has not only a right but an obligation to intervene. This intervention may take a number of forms. In general the decisions would stand although the Authority may decide that in the best interests of students a decision should be changed and it may direct that this should be done. Such directions would be rare and only taken when the welfare of students was involved.

In most cases we believe it appropriate that the Authority should advise a board that it understands that an action was taken in good faith and based upon an assessment of the needs of the moment. On the other hand, with the advantages of hind-sight or subsequent information the Authority may decide to advise a board that in its view, while it was appropriate that the decision was taken, it does consider that the decision was not a wise one. Accordingly, it will allow the decision to stand but it does not consider that the decision should be seen as a precedent.

The Committee recognizes that such negotiations are a regular feature of the work of any body such as the ACT Schools Authority, but it has been unable to find a clear reference to the matter.

If the need for such action is accepted there is also a need to establish machinery for providing for an assessment to be made. This is difficult in a system which has no provision for that echelon of people in State departments who are called by a variety of names: inspector, superintendent, and so on. These provide the State departments with a capacity to "trouble shoot" schools with the assistance of officers who are senior to school principals. Where there are indications of unacceptable practice through allegations by members of the public, these people are able to make informed and objective comment on the accuracy of the allegations. Consultant staff should not be used for this purpose as their task is a supportive, non-judgemental one and to put them in the position of critics or commentators would be to subvert the essential trusting relationship between teachers and themselves.

Nor should senior administrative officers of the Authority undertake this assessment work. By the very nature of their positions they are remote from the day to day running of schools and classrooms. They are frequently out of touch with current classroom practice. Furthermore the Committee believes that the nature of the Authority is such that it cannot at the same time be supportive, approachable and flexible, and judgemental and directive.

The Committee favours the establishment of an group comprising practitioners, parents and informed people to whom such matters can be referred. The results of the investigation can then be considered by the Authority, a decision taken and appropriate remedial action taken if necessary.

Summary

Present curriculum development processes do not allow for real involvement of parents and students, or even of the whole staff throughout the process. Rather they strengthen the power of subject departments. Curriculum development should be a continuous process involving all sections of the school. If education is to be a real partnership then there is need for the

partners to become more collaborative. We believe that teachers will need to make the first move, but parents and parent organizations will have to keep the process going. To this end there is a need to revitalize the P & C Associations. Similarly there is a need for student councils and student board membership to become more than token.

Schools need to realize that full community involvement in curriculum is a method of validation and provides a real protection for staffs. Further validation would be provided by the involvement of teachers and other experts from outside the school. A system of Local Education Networks would assist in this process, and it should also be valuable in other ways.

Curriculum development must take place through agreed system guidelines which are arrived at collegially, not by central decree. We suggest a possible model for community action in this area. We also see a need for a Curriculum Advisory Board with strong school representation, and apart from the usual standing committee structure. We are opposed to common system syllabuses or core, and to system testing. We do, however, favour a core of the type proposed by the national Curriculum Development Centre, as a basis for school curriculum negotiation. Accountability is best ensured through full community involvement in school governance and evaluation. There is a need for the system and the wider community to assure itself of the validity of the evaluation process and this is best done through review panels. The Authority has a duty to ensure that assistance and resources are provided for this process. There may also be a need from time to time for system-wide evaluation of subject areas.

Even with such safeguards there is the possibility of difficulties arising which warrant Authority intervention in a school. We do not favour the use of individual officials such as inspectors or senior officers of the Authority to investigate such problems but rather a group established for the purpose.

We recommend that school communities take action to ensure the involvement of all sections throughout the process of curriculum development. To this end efforts should be made to revitalize P & C Associations and Student Councils.

We also recommend the establishment of a series of Local Education Networks along the lines, and for the purposes, we have outlined in the Report.

We recommend further the establishment of a Curriculum Advisory Board composed of acknowledged curriculum experts, and with strong representation from schools for the purpose of focussing system attention on new curriculum needs, keeping the system aware of curriculum movements elsewhere, and drafting guideline documents. Through this Board or a specially formed group the Schools Authority should initiate the widest possible school and community discussion of key issues in curriculum.

In the area of accountability we recommend that a mandatory process of internal school evaluation and external review be instituted with resources and implementation assistance provided by the Authority.

We now move on to describe some features of the system, and to highlight some issues which we believe require system action.

In the previous chapters we dealt at some length with the task which schools and the people connected with them face in undertaking the changes which we see as necessary. We alluded, too, to system responsibilities. In this chapter we discuss a miscellany of matters, most of them to do with the part the system is playing and must play in the future, together with outside agencies and the wider community. In the first instance we refer to the structure of the school system and then turn again to curriculum and curriculum support issues, reinforcing the fact that we see curriculum as the heart of our investigation.

Structure of the School System

In tracing the development of the present school system in Chapter 1, reference was made to the considerations of the Campbell Committee of various structures including the middle school structure. Our terms of reference required us to comment on the appropriateness of the existing K-6, 7-10, 11-12 structure.

Neither in the submissions made to us or in any of the discussions initiated were there any strong views expressed about changing the existing structure. Indeed it seemed to us that, given the magnitude of the structural changes made relatively recently, there was a reluctance to even countenance the possibility of a further restructuring. On the other hand we gained the impression that there is a good deal of satisfaction with the present structure. It has been implicit in much of what has been discussed in previous chapters that the structural status quo has not been seriously challenged. Stated explicitly it is our opinion that the current structure of four-year high schools spanning Years 7-10 and colleges for Years 11 and 12 remains appropriate as the general arrangement for secondary education in the ACT.

One submission put the argument that the establishment of one six-year high school would give expression to the policy of diversity within the system but it is our view that any such departure would properly come from a local school community expressing such a need.

In connection with system structure we considered two discussion papers distributed by the Schools Authority in 1982; High School Provision for North Canberra and Planning for the Future: An Educational Option, the latter is directed particularly at education provision in the developing Tuggeranong Creek South area. Comment is also made on these papers in Chapter 12. We were aware of the somewhat hostile response to both these papers from the community. Some of this hostility, it was put to us,

was the result of a belief that a decision to close one High School in the North Canberra area seemed inevitable and in the other case that a new area might be denied the type of schools provided in the rest of the ACT.

There is no doubt that when people are aware that decisions must be taken within a relatively short period of time suggestions for discussion of change or innovation will be viewed with suspicion. Any discussion that does take place will be hindered by preconceived ideas or territorial concerns.

Regarding the North Canberra area we are conscious that the decision to continue Watson High School as a small community school will provide the opportunity to re-open, in a less hostile environment, community wide discussion on ways to continue to provide for the needs of students within a local area. The diversity we have seen within and between high schools in the ACT provides opportunities for schools, working together, to ensure that provision across an area allows for a full range of options for students.

In the context of our suggestions for improving processes for the consideration of discussion papers by the Authority and encouragement and support from the administration we believe that further examination and debate on the suggestions in both these papers would be in the interests of the ACT school community. The prospect of continued decline in school-age population demands informed community debate on the size and structure of schools within public systems. This applies, as elsewhere, in the ACT where the overall decline may be less but the effects of its uneven incidence more noticeable.

The Committee is of the view that while protecting and extending the best features of the present system in the ACT there is no reason why different schooling arrangements in different parts of the ACT could not be supported.

Retention from Year 10 to Year 11 remains high in the ACT and gives no reason for concern at the break between high schools and colleges as some were concerned it might. Indeed not only does retention from high school into college continue to increase (86% in 1981) but a small but significant and growing number of students are moving from non-government secondary schools into the colleges.

Shared Experience in Curriculum

The Committee has drawn attention to a number of features in the ACT school system which it considers to be praiseworthy. One of these is the vigour with which the Authority has continued to pursue reviews of a number of aspects of its operation during the course of the High School Review. The Committee has found the on-going discussions on future directions of curriculum particularly useful. It welcomes the opportunity to react to the Authority green paper on curriculum, issued in March 1983.

The Committee wishes to reinforce the definition of curriculum as "including all the learning experiences planned and organized by the school, and particularly those which take place in the school". It finds this much more useful than a narrower view which sees the curriculum in terms of a written set of syllabuses or courses, a view which often prevails among parents as well as in schools. It is a view which is given unconscious reinforcement in most educational systems by the nature of student assessment, accreditation processes, certification and the nature of support services provided for schools.

Another view of curriculum would encompass those learning experiences which are not planned and organized by the school but which occur continuously just through students being at school. Some of this is often referred to as the "hidden curriculum". Indeed, the Committee is of the view that much of what the green paper refers to as "the moral, ...emotional, ... and social development of the pupil" is usually not explicitly provided as planned and ordered learning experiences. If they are so provided they would appear to us to be given a relatively low priority. We have suggested that more attention should be given to these important aspects of the curriculum, without in any way implying that schools should assume total responsibility.

In discussing the need for a review of curriculum policy, the green paper points out that today

> "schools are confronted with a rapidly changing world. The very rate of change and the many conflicting forces impinge upon curriculum planning and practice. Among these forces are the ones identified by the Curriculum Development Centre in Core Curriculum for Australian Schools, (1980) such as increased demands for basic and essential skills; the multicultural composition of our population; growing regional and international roles for Australia; the disturbance effect of rapid scientific and technological development; the changing patterns of work and the emergence of structural unemployment; more open, flexible and varied lifestyles; and the impact of such forces as television and the leisure industry which affect children's tastes, values and interests." (ACT Schools Authority 1983).

As discussed elsewhere, such circumstances are not peculiar to the ACT.

School systems throughout Australia must grapple with the same issues. The nature of the curriculum policy process is, however, different in the ACT and it is in this context that our analysis had been made. As pointed out in the green paper, the process

is an interactive one. It is necessarily a complex process but a valued one, and one which the Committee supports. As the Schools Authority has recognized, however, the circumstances which obtained in 1973 are no longer the same in 1983 and a fresh statement of the roles and responsibilities of the participants and partners in the curriculum process is needed.

System Consultants

The major resource for curriculum development implementation provided by any system is through its network of consultants. There are about twenty positions which are allocated among the following areas: Art, Computer Studies, Early Childhood, English, Home Economics and Textiles, Industrial Arts, Language Arts, Mathematics, Music, Physical Education and Health, Science, English as a Second Language (ESL), Social Studies, and Special Needs. As well, there is an Aboriginal Schools Visitor.

There are also other people in the Curriculum Branch who provide advice to teachers. For example there are people in school library services and educational media services. There is also a person to advise on each of multicultural education, career education, work experience, transition education and transition education materials, leisure education, elimination of sexism and four other teachers who work on Authority priorities.

The subject consultants were asked to indicate how they spend their time in the performance of their current duties. The activities were listed as follows:

1. Work in and with schools

   This area includes visits to schools to provide advice on teaching methodologies, curriculum development and school or course evaluation. The consultants may be involved in working with the whole staff, with individual teachers, with children or in demonstration lessons.

2. Work related to Schools Authority system needs

   Consultants may represent the Schools Authority on committees or be involved with the accreditation of college courses. In addition they liaise with commercial, professional, industrial and community groups as representatives of the Schools Authority. In this area they may offer advice to the Schools Authority in their particular field.

3. In-service education

   Consultants provide central in-service education in addition to that which is provided in schools. Included in this category is time spent in the preparation of in-service activities for teachers and liaison with the Staff Development Section.

4. Work related to the particular area of the consultancy

Advice in this area is based upon the particular strength of the individual consultants and includes professional association activities, buying, recommending, or servicing specialist equipment, arranging conferences, seminars, work with itinerant teachers and the preparation of curriculum materials. This area of the consultants' work includes all activities related to the consultant's particular area which is not done in face to face contact with teachers.

5. Travelling time and clerical work

6. Professional reading, development and discussion

The Committee was advised that consultants' time is divided between these activities in the following manner.

Table 4

Consultants' Use of Time

Category	Average Time %	Hours/week	Range
Work in and with schools	29%	10.7 hrs	8% - 56%
Work for Schools Authority	10%	3.7 hrs	2% - 21%
In service	12%	4.4 hrs	1% - 39%
Specific area consultancy	24%	8.8 hrs	10% - 36%
Travelling and clerical	16%	5.9 hrs	9% - 34%
Professional reading/development	9%	3.3 hrs	2% - 15%

These figures indicate that consultants are called upon to meet a wide variety of duties. An individual consultant may be required to write reports, demonstrate teaching techniques, provide advice to parents, employer groups or the Authority as well as their central services to teachers.

It is noted that the percentage of time spent by consultants on clerical work varies from 5% to 32% with an average of 10%. The extreme of 32% results from a specific brief given to a consultant for a short term project, but the high figure of 10% merits further enquiry.

Consultants recognize that a proportion of time on clerical work cannot be avoided but they claim, and the Committee agrees, that they appear to be spending far too much of their time on clerical tasks such as typing, photocopying, collating and mailing. This warrants examination.

Furthermore, each of the consultants spends between 2% and 21% of time on work relating to representing the system. While this work may be important, there is a need to ensure that it is more important than working directly with teachers and children. Our attention was also drawn to this matter by the interstate subject consultants.

The Committee believes that there is a case for the appointment of additional consultants in certain subject areas, especially those which are changing rapidly. It recognizes that this resource allocation issue is a responsibility of the Authority although it contends that this decision should be made in consultation with schools, say through the machinery of Local Education Networks, especially in relation to the question of setting priorities and determining what must be foregone.

There is a need in curriculum service for some constricting of staffing through permanent appointments. With regard to consultants, however, we believe that most such positions should not be filled permanently but by appointment for a fixed term. This should enable skilled practitioners from schools to move into a position, develop consultancy skills, develop professionally in other ways and return to schools. There is, admittedly, a loss of expertise built up, but we believe that the gains to schools and to other teachers who are able to have such an experience, compensate for the lack of continuity and an initial drop in the level of consultancy skills available. In a period of limited promotion opportunity and limited mobility, such opportunities for job rotation are valuable. We consider that the Authority should ensure that any future priorities are filled on this basis.

A further strong argument in favour of fixed term appointments is that system and school requirements change over time. Consultancy in some areas becomes less necessary; new needs arise in other areas. Without this flexibility, there is a real danger that rigidification of the consultancy into specific subject areas or curriculum thrusts can occur, paralleling or even reinforcing these characteristics in the curriculum in schools.

In addition to consultancies in some specific subject areas, we believe that schools would be assisted by the appointment of some "process" consultants whose concerns were more with processes of learning, curriculum development and evaluation and effecting change rather than with a subject and, particularly, content orientation. We recognise that the best subject consultants do incorporate these activities into their work but the labelling attached to them tends to limit their contribution in schools.

Another form of consultancy is provided by the Evaluation and Research staff of the Authority who assist teachers in clarifying aims and objectives and in evaluating courses or broader aspects of the school's curriculum. We commend their splendid work and we have indicated elsewhere that we believe this activity should be expanded and additional resources will be required for this to occur.

Master Teachers

The role of master teacher was conceived with what would appear to be two main aims:

1 to identify teachers who have demonstrated a high degree of excellence in teaching practice;

2 to reward such teachers and thus encourage them to remain in the classroom rather than to seek administrative positions.

Details of the number of master teachers, their distribution by type of school and, where appropriate, by subject area, are given in Table 5.

The Committee is not in a position to comment on the effectiveness of the process of selecting master teachers. It has reason to believe, however, that among this group are some very talented teachers who seem to be experiencing considerable role ambiguity. While some might claim that simply to be a master teacher and to be financially rewarded for this high level of skill is sufficient in itself, we cannot escape the conclusion that a potentially valuable resource is being wasted.

The Committee believes that while the master teacher plan has been most commendable both in principle and practice, it finds little evidence to suggest that their skills and talents are used to the advantage of children and teachers in schools other than those in the school to which the master teacher is appointed. It would be a simple thing to arrange for other teachers to have access to these teachers as they go about their teaching duties and to gain from seeing these outstanding teachers in action, if such a role was agreed.

The Committee applauds the notion of encouraging good teachers to continue to strive for excellence in the classroom as a valued career in itself and not simply as a step towards an administrative position. Indeed the Committee favours a leadership position structure which, through being more flexible and adaptable than the normal hierarchical structure, would encourage teachers to wish to alternate between administrative and classroom experience.

TABLE 5

Distribution of Master Teachers

		Number of Master Teachers 1982
Colleges		21
High Schools	13	
Band 2s in high schools holding M.T. eligibility	3	
Master Teacher (Primary) in high school	1	17
Primary Schools		17
Office and Clinics		5
		60

Distribution among high schools

5 high schools have 2 master teachers on the staff.

7 high schools have 1 master teacher

6 high schools have no master teachers.

Subject fields in high schools

Special education/ slow learners 5

Social Science 3

1 each of Mathematics, Languages, Industrial Arts, Physical Education, Music, Science, English/History, Art, School Community Liaison.

The Committee suggests that better use could be made of the talents of master teachers by the system if

* there was a job specification and it included a responsibility to act as a curriculum leader in the school, in the area of speciality;

* some additional allowance of non-contact time was made to accommodate this role. We note that a similar recommendation was made by the Primary Review Committee (para 84);

* master teachers were seen as a pool from which short term secondments as advisory/support staff were selected.

This added dimension to the role of the master teacher should not carry with it any administrative or supervisory responsibilities which belong to heads of subject departments or assistant principals. To do so would result in role conflict. The Committee notes that master teachers are paid at the Band 2 salary level. It offers no comment on the appropriateness of this level but does suggest that, rather than the position of master teacher being a permanent position, it should be for five year terms. It should, however, continue to be a system appointment rather than tied to a specific school as are "positions of responsibility" in other systems.

We have suggested that changes to the concept of the master teacher and redeployment of some assistant principal staff in schools could augment advisory and support staff resources. These initiatives are seen as being desirable now. They will become even more important as the size of many of the high schools decreases and additional stresses are placed on the processes of curriculum development in schools, particularly in the more highly specialist subject areas. Faculties which decline to a membership of one or two can hardly be expected to have the time or the expertise to engage independently in course construction or curriculum review.

These issues are being addressed by schools as a response to the green paper. It is proper that this should be the process and the Committee is reluctant therefore to be seen in any way to truncate this process. Nevertheless, while leaving schools and the Authority to decide on the most appropriate solutions and to identify the specific actions which may be needed, the Committee feels that it has received sufficient support through submissions, research and its own observations to be able to

* endorse the general approach adopted in the green paper;

* feel confident in proposing that action be taken in the general areas outlined above.

Student Transition and Curriculum Articulation

Some of the interstate curriculum consultants were critical of a lack of articulation in courses in their subjects. This could mean a number of things. The most consistent criticism was of the lack of system articulation and necessary connection between courses in a subject in one school and another. The consultants were not making a case for uniform curriculum imposed by the Authority, but they were making a strong plea for guidelines to assist teachers and to provide some comparability. "There are dimensions of language and literacy which are creating debate and provoking a reworking of the purposes and philosophies of English. Such debate and reconsidering of the role of the English teacher in relation to the rest of the curriculum is vital in our schools. I see little of this in the ACT. I would recommend that schools need to be supported by curriculum guidelines which are not prescriptive, but which provoke rethinking of issues and concerns in English." This is supported by the Language consultant: "...broadly based curriculum guidelines should be made available to schools for each subject area, not to prescribe, but rather to support and give direction."

A major recommendation in the Social Science consultant's report is for a project team to draft a statement to justify the place and enhance the status of the subject in the high school curriculum, and to prepare "practical sound guidelines" for course development. "While not being prescriptive these guidelines should give enough direction to ensure that schools do in reality provide relevant and comprehensive Social Science programs, not merely cosmetic changes." The Mathematics consultant warns of the problems ahead of high schools because "... there are no system guidelines for school computing in the ACT. Should the Schools Commission be funded to embark on a school computing program, the ACT school system is in an ideal position to capitalize on the possible resources to be provided - a small number of schools, academically qualified staff and geographical concentration of schools. This lack of system wide guidelines, forward planning and the current state of lack of readiness definitely negates the advantages at the present."

The Science consultant points to a different problem in articulation in the system. He advocates "non-prescriptive guidelines" in Science not only to provide a framework within Years 7-10 but also to link high school courses with primary and college courses. "It also is important for teachers in the various stages of science education to acknowledge, complement, and develop the work of others. At present this is quite seriously not the case. There is, most urgently, a breakdown in communication and continuity of science education at the high school-college transition. As a consequence, both Year 10 students and teachers in high schools and possibly colleges, are subject to academic stresses that are quite unnecessary."

The Industrial Arts consultant comments that " ... most teachers express little concern at the lack of curriculum links with primary school craft programs but they do see value in establishing closer ties with the colleges." The Mathematics consultant indicates a different lack: "While there was evidence of college mathematics courses influencing the content of high school courses, there is possibly a more significant influence on student attitude towards mathematics resulting from the junior primary school approach to mathematics. It may well be profitable to do a study of the attitudes towards mathematics expressed by junior primary school teachers and the effect their attitudes have upon students." The Language consultant notes that languages are taught in some primary schools but with no arrangements made to ensure that a particular language could be carried on in high school: " ... the flow-on was left to chance". In general terms, the Music consultant suggests that ".. there are a number of hiccups in the educational curriculum and there is little evidence of definite and formal links between Years 6 and 7 and Years 10 and 11. There are informal conventions, negotiations and excursions between primary/high schools and college but the impression is that each group is very active getting its own house in order and neighbourly discussions are part of that exercise. The formalising or articulation of curriculum across these divides is a major task."

Problems reported to the Committee of lack of curriculum cohesion between primary and high schools seemed most often to do with lack of communication and therefore knowledge and understanding of what was happening in neighbouring schools. The question of whether students are adquately prepared for the next stage of their schooling is a perennial one. The perception that each could do a better job if the one before had done better exists even in schools which cater for students from K-12 and will probably continue to do so whatever measures are taken.

A number of schools we visited, however, have taken positive steps to reduce these possibilities and to avoid problems of social adjustment. These included several clusters of schools - high schools and their feeder primaries - where teachers meet and spend some time with Year 6 students and are able to monitor their transition to high school the following year. This enabled attention to be given to students with special needs, either educational or social, and also provided students with a 'known and friendly face' in the larger more formal school.

In some cases these activities have been supported by special staffing arrangements made by the Authority. We applaud this assistance and hope it can be extended to other clusters.

At the same time we were disturbed that some high schools reported that neither their Curriculum nor Student Welfare Assistant Principal had sufficient time to take action to alleviate problems which they themselves had reported.

Strengthening co-operative networks in areas and the suggestions we have made in regard to consultants and counsellors are the most appropriate ways, in our opinion, of dealing with problems of transition.

In addition to these measures in the case of transition from high school to college we believe greater opportunities could be provided for high school students to participate in some courses in the colleges or in other high schools. Students with special interests or talents could benefit enormously from the opportunity to attend classes in their neighbouring college.

Students saw problems of transition from high school to college mainly in the need to adjust to different student teacher relationships and a greater degree of freedom and choice. College students looked back on their high school experiences as having provided much less satisfactory relationships between them and their teachers than they would have liked. We have dealt with these matters of relationships in an earlier section of our report but mention them here again to show that not only must changes be made in the structural arrangements and other action taken to provide better liaison between the sectors, but that all or any of these initiatives must be taken in the knowledge that they must address the problems as students and teachers see them.

Information Sharing

The problem of 'cohesion' was mentioned to us by many people at all levels. While this at first seemed to us strange in a system which values its diversity we understand how this can become a concern when there is, in many cases, a lack of knowledge about what other schools are doing.

One of our earliest impressions was of the isolation of high schools, there seemed to be a lack of knowledge but a similarity of concerns. We were surprised that this should be so in a system of this size. Insularity is perhaps simply an expression of the misunderstandings of the notion of autonomy or independence we have mentioned elsewhere. Nevertheless the fact that our early strong impressions were reinforced by perceptions within the system of the focus of concern in some of the recent Authority documents and only partly mitigated by what we have seen and heard ourselves leads us to recommend that steps be taken to facilitate the development of further co-operative arrangements and information sharing between schools and between schools and their communities.

The Local Education Networks discussed in Chapter 10 appear to provide an appropriate answer to these problems.

School Without Walls

Probably the most striking example of this lack of knowledge of other schools is provided by SWOW which must be one of the most misunderstood of Canberra institutions, both among professionals and the public.

Members of the Review Committee visited the School Without Walls and shared the positive feelings and strong support for the school that were expressed by many people not connected with it. We were impressed by the students and teachers, particularly their commitment to the tasks they share and the responsibility each participant accepted for learning. We noted the gradual shift in the age group enrolled at SWOW and regarded this as largely due to the general acceptance of the colleges which now appear to satisfy the requirements of some of those students and their parents who may have chosen SWOW in its earlier years. Although we support its acceptance of younger students we would counsel against it being used as a residual centre for students judged to be non-conformists in their neighbourhood school. Not only would this eventually destroy the nature of SWOW as a genuinely co-operative learning environment but would also, as many annexe initiatives have done, remove some of the pressures for high schools to consider carefully their responsibility to cater for the whole age group. Although some of the achievements of SWOW are made possible because of the size of the school we believe there are nevertheless many lessons which other schools can learn from the ways in which relationships between learners and teachers have been, and are being, developed.

Support for Curriculum in Schools

The interstate curriculum consultants were concerned about lack of systemic support for teachers in schools. Even with guidelines provided, the task of developing curriculum in schools is a complex and demanding one and needs special and carefully defined support. This takes various forms. The suggestion made by almost all consultants for some kind of support or "standing committee" for each subject is one kind. One consultant suggested that subject associations can assist in generating ideas in a subject and act as a forum for exchange and development, but states "... it cannot be left to the local teachers' association alone to support school based curriculum development. Teachers should be involved in this discussion process via standing curriculum committee or project teams called upon to prepare guidelines or discussion papers." This kind of strategy is important, she suggests, to avoid insularity and stagnation. "School based curriculum development demands a focussing of teacher thought and energies so that common beliefs and theories about language teaching and development and about the acquisition of literacy skills for present and future society can underpin classroom practice."

These standing committees should be broadly representative and provide the "variety of lights" on curriculum issues as suggested in the curriculum model by Schwab in an earlier chapter of this report, and should cover all schools. Thus in Art: "It is recommended that a broadly representative Art Subject Committee be established to include practising teachers, system subject

consultants and tertiary art education and Australian National Gallery representatives. The general aim of the committee would be to oversee the development of art education in ACT schools." It was predictable that where the system has no, or few, consultants in a subject, there would be a call for additional personnel to be appointed. But there were variations suggested. In Art, for instance, it was suggested that a team of practising teachers should be seconded for a short period of 1-2 years to assist the full-time consultant; in English, the role of "Resource Teachers" was given prominence; in Industrial Arts the suggestion was for a technical officer to complement the work of the consultant; and in almost all subjects a strong recommendation was made that occasionally, visiting experts be brought from other systems or locations to provide fresh input of ideas and break down the insularity that is such a danger in a small system.

Other suggestions on professional development included the possibility of ACT high school teachers visiting other systems. As the interstate Science consultant pointed out: "Professional development of teachers is an important role that requires development by individual school administrations as well as the Schools Authority. If the school system is exclusively to service its own needs then there is a danger of pooling its own ignorance. It is important that teachers have the opportunity to visit, observe and report on other school systems as well as for them to come into active contact with authoritative figures from other State and international education systems. There is little evidence that this is occurring."

As a Review Committee we are obviously sympathetic to the need for assistance in subject areas, but we are somewhat wary of setting up a formal set of subject committees which may well have the effect of further rigidifying the compartments into which the present curriculum is locked, and which we see as being a major constraint on curriculum change.

The nature of curriculum development, implementation and maintenance is clearly dependent upon the form of the educational system in which it takes place. In a devolved-participative system, the processes are necessarily complex and are dependent on an effective information flow being developed.

In the model which has been developed in the ACT, the school is a key element in the process. It is the focal point of curriculum activity as well as the place where the learning experiences occur.

We have drawn attention to our perception that, while preserving the individuality of schools, the processes of school based curriculum development are enhanced if they are approached as a co-operative activity rather than in isolation. We stress again the interdependence of schools within a community rather than their independence or autonomy. These co-operative efforts and

developments in individual schools require a substantial input of resources and energy if they are to be effective. They also require a level of expertise in curriculum development which is not available uniformly within a school or across schools, even if there may be some individuals in schools who are competent in this area.

Indeed, the Committee has been impressed by the level of commitment and competence shown by some highly motivated teachers who have initiated and sustained specific curriculum developments. The demands on such individuals are great and it is unrealistic to expect that such endeavours should be the norm. The normal demands of teaching are sufficient for most teachers. This is not to say that the normal demands on a teacher should not include involvement in curriculum planning. We believe they should. There is a different level of commitment and a different quality in the curriculum if teachers are involved in curriculum planning within a school. The dilemma is how to balance the level of school based input with that of system based development and support in such a way that commitment remains at school level, that demands on teacher time and curriculum development competence are realistic, and that specialized skills in curriculum development on a system basis are used and more efficient and effective use made of available resources.

The ACT Schools Authority, in pursuing its philosophy of locating curriculum development at the local school has nevertheless felt a need to identify some curriculum priorities and to issue policy statements in a number of 'across the curriculum areas'. These statements are Education and the Arts (1978), Career Education (1979), Sexism in Education (1979), Multicultural Education (1979), Bilingual Education (1981) and is in the process of developing statements on Computer Education (1982) and Leisure Education (1982). The Committee commends the Authority for these initiatives. It believes that such thrusts, while implemented at the local level, would develop only spasmodically, if at all, if left to the initiative of individual schools. The Committee considers that it is a right and proper use of the Authority's prerogative, on behalf of the community, to identify such curriculum priorities and to take the initiative in supporting schools in adapting curricula to incorporate such broad and important thrusts. The Authority has the option of merely drawing the attention of schools to new developments, providing guidelines and support and issuing policy statements which commit schools to incorporating new initiatives, while leaving schools considerable freedom in the manner in which these initiatives are translated into the school curriculum.

Some respondents have put it to us that they have felt rather isolated when these policy statements have appeared. They have at times felt that they were being asked to introduce new subjects without being given the resources to handle them. We

believe, as we have previously stated, that some of these curriculum directions cannot be "taught" in the formal sense of the word, being better treated as attitudes which should permeate the atmosphere of the school. Others, such as Careers, Computers and Leisure Education are probably more easily and efficaciously dealt with as core learnings which can be spread over a number of subject areas rather than as additional subjects.

Had the collaborative process which we have described been used in the development and dissemination of these initiatives they may well have been more clearly understood and better received by schools.

In the view of the Committee, the community and indeed the majority of schools would welcome a similar level of guidance, support or even direction in establishing a clearer curriculum framework in which the high schools are expected to work. Once again the Committee stresses that it believes that this would be a positive move, entirely in keeping with the foundation principles of the system and not a return to any form of centralized prescription. This guidance should take the form of the minimum requirements for schools to operate within a system. It is clearly an expectation that a significant number of the community holds. Furthermore, rather than interfering in any way with local school curriculum development and the responsibilities given in this area to school boards, we believe that these processes would be facilitated and be given greater credibility in the community.

The alternative is for each school to go its own way, claiming complete autonomy and a degree of independence which the Ordinance does not provide. This leads to a loose affiliation of independent schools rather than a system. A school system is more than aggregated ad hoc co-operative endeavours among a few schools or among groups of teachers. The advantage of a systemic approach is that it can provide more effectively for the use of curriculum resources and expertise and, provided the processes used are compatible with a system commitment to school ownership of the curriculum within a given framework, the ability of a school to respond to the education needs of its clients is enhanced, not inhibited.

If the developments foreshadowed in this report are to eventuate, there must be adequate system support for the development, implementation and maintenance of the curriculum in high schools. An important prerequisite is an understanding among the parties involved of respective roles and responsibilities. Some proposals to clarify these in a devolved/participative system have been put forward. Before discussing the nature of system support proposed, it is worth restating the general underlying principles supported by the Committee.

These include

* a commitment to the concept of school based curriculum development;

* that this should occur within a curriculum framework determined by the Authority;

* a recognition that there should exist a shared undertanding about educational experiences in high schools;

* a recognition that transition from primary schools to high schools and a high mobility within the system assumes a high commonality of exposure to learning experiences and to the development of skills in basic areas of the curriculum;

* a recognition that there is a degree of interdependence among schools in a school system;

* a recognition that economy of effort can be achieved if some aspects of curriculum development are approached on a co-operative basis.

Based on these principles, for which the Committee feels there is considerable support, both from its contacts with schools and from an analysis of submissions received, the Committee considers that the ACT Schools Authority should reaffirm its commitment to its foundation principles but with an increased emphasis given to the need for inter-relationships between components of the system. This would result in a degree of mutual interdependence being stressed rather than the myth of autonomy as an absolute state of independence being perpetuated.

If this approach is adopted, we believe that the capacity of schools to respond to the perceived needs of their students and to react in a genuinely school-based way would be strengthened rather than weakened. To put it another way and yet to restate what is emphasized in a number of ways in this Report, the Committee is not advocating the abrogation of the foundation principles of the system nor recommending movement towards a system of central control. Rather, it proposes that the recognized and valued aspects of what was an essentially pioneering development be enhanced by the measures the Committee proposes.

Thus, it seems to us that it would be appropriate for the Schools Authority to examine and re-define the role of the Curriculum Branch with particular consideration being given to the nature of the role of consultants. This would necessarily involve taking steps to enhance the valued work of the various groups located at the O'Connell Education Centre. What we envisage is that the responsibility of the Authority would be to provide

curriculum guidelines for schools, from which schools would be better able to develop their own curriculum plans. This would entail the provision of an improved level of professional development opportunities geared to system determined curriculum priorities arrived at in full consultation with schools. It would become necessary to match the operations of the relevant groups to these declared priorities using a 3-5 year planning framework. We have referred elsewhere to a need for staffing flexibility and turnover of staffing in the consultancy.

If these aims are to be achieved there must be a balance between consultants oriented towards subject specific areas of the curriculum and those concerned with curriculum processes. We have drawn attention to dangers of rigidification of subject departments in schools. While recognizing a need for the valuable work done by consultants, an undue emphasis in these areas tends to reinforce the role of subject departments in schools.

Some of the problems experienced in transition and in curriculum articulation would be overcome if efforts were made to foster the establishment of both formal and informal co-operative arrangements among clusters of schools, primary and high schools and among high schools and colleges.

Staff and Community Development

We believe that we have established that change in high schools is essential. The change process is notoriously difficult, in education as in any other area. It will require more than just a recognition by individual teachers that change is necessary. Considerable thought will need to be given to change agents and to the processes of change. Some key participants in this are

* principals of high schools,
* heads of subject departments,
* assistant principals,
* chairperson and members of school boards, and
* consultant and advisory staff.

If change is to be effected, carefully planned in-service and professional development activity will be necessary. Some of the research studies conducted for this Review provide a wealth of information which will be of use to schools and the Schools Authority in responding to defined teacher staff development needs.

On the basis of this information and our own conclusions drawn from other evidence, we believe that programs of staff development activity which are needed should include the following four dimensions:

* in-school staff development;

* cross school activity with key personnel;

* visits by key change agents to other systems;

* visits by external catalysts to the ACT high schools.

It is recommended that the Joint ACT Professional Development Committee give a high priority to professional development needs in high schools over the next three years and that additional funds be made available by the Authority to enable 4. above to occur.

If high schools are to respond to the challenges we have identified, we have stressed the importance of effective participation in decision-making at school level. This includes parents and citizens generally. It means these groups must become better informed, be consulted more frequently and participate more actively in shaping the future of the schools. This includes the curriculum, in the broad sense in which the Authority uses the term. We have suggested that the Parents and Citizens Associations should adopt a more active role in schools. This will not just happen. It will require support from the Authority and, perhaps even more importantly, genuine commitment from school boards and principals. But it requires more. It will need a planned and properly resourced in-service program, developed co-operatively with schools and the Council of Parents and Citizens Associations.

The ACT Council of P & C Associations has suggested that it would be valuable for a comprehensive kit or package to be developed which contains essential basic information on how the system operates. We believe that this would be valuable, particularly if the materials were used in conjunction with in-service courses available for new members of boards and Parents and Citizens Associations. Although the Council itself is a voluntary organization, the nature of its work under the Ordinance and the importance of the potential influence of P & C Associations in schools makes them an essential resource which requires strong system support.

This would acknowledge that parents are partners in the education system and that parent development together with teacher development is essential to a successful participative system. We note that this view is supported by the Schools Commission.

Community Resources

In addition to the resources provided to schools by the Authority, schools have access to a wide range of community resources. Many schools already make good use of these. Canberra, as the National Capital, is particularly fortunate in the nature and range of resources readily available to a relatively small group of students. These resources include government, art gallery, courts, museums, libraries, sporting facilities, embassies, and a host of other private and official learning opportunities.

There is an extensive range of human resources which are available and can be brought into the schools, adding new dimensions to the curriculum. Variants on the concept of 'artist in residence' who may of course be a poet or writer, have been used successfully by some schools using seeding funds provided by the Australia Council and through the Authority's own Curriculum Development Projects scheme. The Committee sees activity of this kind as valuable and favours the provision of funds to sustain some element of this kind of activity once seeding finance ceases. In all we are advocating an increased openness and flexibility in the ways in which high schools use community resources, both by moving out from the school and by extending the human resources within the school.

Another way in which schools can encourage and support students is by giving credit for suitable activities conducted outside the schools. We mentioned in a previous chapter teachers' common experience that alienated students frequently identify with schooling when an interest is taken in their hobbies. We believe that a similar result could be gained if students could not only see that the school was interested in their activities but was also willing to acknowledge them in official documentation, and to make special timetable provisions to assist.

Obvious examples would be learning a musical instrument or studying a language that cannot be provided by the school. Recognition of the worth of the study undertaken at ethnic schools could provide a much needed boost to the self-esteem of many migrant children, and perhaps also assist in home language maintenance and parent-child communication.

Guidance and Counselling

The Committee has studied the Report of a committee established to conduct a review of guidance and counselling services. Due to this separate review, the Committee did not examine this area in any detail. Its observations in the high school sector are, however, confirmed by the conclusions reached in the Report of the Review of Guidance and Counselling Services.

In particular, the Committee supports the concept embodied in Recommendation 1 that the orientation of the counsellor role should be a preventive one rather than a crisis oriented one, both in individual schools and across the system. There will, nevertheless, continue to be a need for individual student counselling. If this orientation develops, it will enhance the counselling role which is inherent in the work of all teachers. Thus, we also endorse Recommendation 2, viz "that the training and in-service education of counsellors should include the development of process skills in teacher- and parent-education, the consultation process, group work and specialist skills as necessary".

The Committee is also attracted to the notion of 'job rotation' between counselling positions in schools and in the proposed Educational Guidance Centre (Recommendation 7) and the hiring on a short term basis of other professional skills as needed (Recommendation 8). These approaches give maximum flexibility to the system, provide for mobility and more varied career options for counsellors, and enable better services to be provided within whatever resource constraints exist. In like manner, the Committee is attracted to the notion of the project teams recommended. It sees these and a number of other thrusts in the report as achieving a desirable balance between providing an essentially school oriented counselling service and at the same time recognizing the need to provide system wide services, to maintain an overview, to ensure that co-ordination occurs where necessary and that the most effective and efficient use is being made of resources, in the interests of the clients of the system.

The Committee suggests that, if the preventive orientation is to be developed, additional resources would be necessary to enable a better service to be provided to primary schools. It would inhibit such a move if existing resources were to be redeployed, particularly at a time when, if recommendations in this report are adopted, there will be a need for a higher level of group work, consultation and counselling skills among teachers. This is an area where counsellors will be able to assist in schools. The Committee believes, however, that there would also need to be a significant system input into such in-servicing.

Relations with TAFE

We have noted in an earlier chapter that the recommendation in the Hughes Report that the ACT Schools Authority should be given authority for TAFE institutions was not accepted.

Instead the TAFE system in the ACT is administered by the Office of ACT Further Education which is part of the Commonwealth Department of Education and Youth Affairs. In addition to this function the Office is also responsible for the Canberra School of Art, the Canberra School of Music, apprenticeship training and Adult Migrant Education. There are three TAFE Colleges in the ACT - Canberra, Bruce and the new College at Woden. Each College has its own Council with membership and functions which allow a significant input from the community and industry into administrative and policy development.

We have been informed that the function of the TAFE Colleges is to provide vocational education which will assist people to obtain employment. Vocational education is, however, seen as more than merely training in a range of skills. It is the provision of relevant educational opportunities which will assist people to gain employment and improve their job prospects while, at the same time, enabling them to acquire the basic understanding needed for continuing education, acquiring other vocational skills and developing as individuals in a rapidly changing society.

Furthermore, as well as meeting the needs of industry and commerce, the TAFE system also aims to meet the needs of individual students. This is achieved by offering a range of formal, vocational courses at a variety of levels, such as:

* associate diploma and certificate courses which train technicians and para-professionals in industry, commerce and community services;

* apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeship and post-trade courses which train skilled workers and provide opportunities for tradesmen to upgrade their skills;

* shorter courses of varying length and depth which provide commercial or technical training for the specific needs of particular groups or cater for personal interests.

The TAFE system does not only provide vocational education. For many years now TAFE Colleges have offered matriculation courses for adults who wish to qualify for entrance to tertiary institutions. Similarly, a range of remedial, preparatory or bridging courses has been developed to assist students who lack the entry qualifications required for some courses or who have been away from formal study for some time. These general education type courses are not duplicating those run by the

school system but are providing alternate opportunities for adults who, for various reasons, failed to complete their secondary schooling and who now wish to make up that loss in an adult environment.

The provision of alternate educational opportunities has been supported by the Kangan Committee which, in its Report, commented "The overlapping of courses as between secondary schools and technical colleges and as between technical colleges and CAE's could be beneficial. Such overlapping could allow adults greater access to recurrent education."

We were pleased to note that the need for close liaison between the Schools Authority and the TAFE Colleges is recognized and encouraged by the two authorities. Indeed we note in an Occasional Paper of the Office of ACT Further Education published in April 1981

> "The Office believes that co-operation between the two sectors is essential in a time of limited resources and government and community scrutiny of the effectiveness of education. It is also believed that co-operation is achievable as, in recent years, the two sectors have been working together in a number of ways."

Examples of this co-operation were the Linked Courses Programs, and the School to Work Transition Program.

The Discussion Paper then went on to state

> "With a workable relatonship between the two sectors of education already established the question now before educational authorities is how this relationship can be broadened to deal effectively with the likely increased overlap between general and vocational education. In a time of economic restraint responsible authorities cannot foster the unnecessary duplication of services and resources. It is essential, therefore, that agreement is reached between the authorities that each has its prinicpal roles and responsibilities which much be met. It is also essential that the two sectors examine areas where duplicaton or overlap occur and consider, in an unbiased manner, whether some rationalisation can take place.
>
> At the interface between TAFE and secondary colleges there are four ways through which the needs of the client group could be satisfied:
>
> (a) By programs conducted in secondary colleges (i.e. programs of a general education nature such as those for students continuing their general secondary educaton beyond the age of compulsion).
>
> (b) By programs conducted in TAFE colleges (i.e. programs of a vocational nature such as apprenticeship and para-professional courses).

(c) By programs jointly conducted by a secondary college and a TAFE college (i.e. programs with a general education strand and a vocational strand). Students would attend two institutions but qualify for one award. Details for the implementation of these courses would have to be worked out but the availability of such courses would increase the educational options available to students by deferring the need to make decisions on future career paths until later in their secondary education. By enrolling in joint courses students would be able to explore a range of possible careers before opting for a particular one. There would be economic benefits from joint courses and optimum use would be made of resources.

(d) By programs conducted in both secondary and TAFE colleges. The availability of similar courses in the two sectors could open up opportunities for further education for adults as well as meeting the different educational needs of students. The viability of such programs is, of course, dependent on the existence of sufficient student demand together with an economical use of resources. If it should become obvious that these courses required expensive duplication of resources it would be imperative for the two sectors to rationalise their programs." (ibid)

The Committee of Review, is of course, interested in high schools and is unable to make any judgement on the progress which has been made in achieving these aims. It does however express its support for them and we are of the view that similar strategies could be discussed, with advantage between the TAFE colleges and the high schools. Our conclusions are that students and teachers have little knowledge of the TAFE sector and that this is unfortunate. In addition, however, we believe that there could be, and should be, opportunities for some students to move between the schools and colleges to take advantage of the courses and facilities available there. We see advantages too in the use of facilities in the high schools by adult students when this is convenient and desirable.

Course Accreditation

The Committee is in no position to comment on the effectiveness of the processes of course development and accreditation used by the ACT Schools Accrediting Agency for secondary colleges. It has little doubt, however, that the establishment of the Agency assisted the new colleges to gain community credibility and that the processes which evolved in developing new courses led to some measure of co-operative endeavour among the colleges.

The accreditation process is claimed to:

* guarantee that the courses are educationally sound and appropriate for students studying in Years 11 and 12 in the ACT;

* maintain the academic standard and quality of the curriculum;

* ensure that students' results are recognized by tertiary institutions, employers and the community nationally and internationally.

There is no process for an external review of the educational program offered by the colleges. Programs built up from approved courses are considered to be satisfactory both for the student and for external recognition. Clearly, counselling is important here. There are approved patterns of study required for a student to be considered for entry to tertiary institutions.

It has been put to the Committee that there are inadequacies in the present procedures for approval of high school education programs and for the approval and registration of high school courses. This matter was investigated by a Working Party in 1980 and, as a result, guidelines were produced to assist schools in fulfilling the Authority's requirements for approving education programs in high schools. We have no doubt, after examining documentation provided before and after 1981, that these guidelines have assisted schools in formulating their programs. We believe that the processes are valuable not only because of the formal approval by a school board, but also in the evaluative processes which a school must use, if there is full commitment to evaluation on these occasions. We do, however, note with concern the rate of turnover of board membership in this regard. Similar considerations apply to course approval by school boards. This can, if abused, become a rubber stamping exercise and involve little more than resubmittal of formerly approved courses without effective evaluation having taken place. We believe that this does occur. We believe that it is important that there should be improved and guaranteed renewal of courses on a continuing basis.

One approach, in a paper submitted to us proposed the modification of the approval/regulation procedure and for the Authority to register the school's approved education program and, in addition, to approve the individual courses. The latter activity would parallel the accreditation process in colleges. What is envisaged in the approach outlined for us, however, is for course proposals to be reviewed by a regional advisory group. This group would report to the school board. Following board approval, courses would be submitted to a Regional Accreditation Panel, through an agency of the Authority. Accreditation, as with college courses would be for a period of five years.

Under this proposal, education programs, after approval by a school board, would receive comment from a Regional Accreditation Panel before being registered by the agency, again for a five year period.

The Committee has some sympathy with the proposal and believes that such an approach could lead to greater confidence in the community about course approval in high schools. On the other hand, we believe that, in the long term, it would be more productive to move towards strengthening the current school approval process by encouraging the greater level of parent and community responsibility and ownership we are advocating throughout the report. This can be achieved if school boards become a more effective influence, as, in itself, it would require a high level of parent/community commitment and greater continuity of membership. It would also require attitudinal changes on the part of some principals in recognizing that a school board is not simply a body to be tolerated or manipulated but rather to be treated as potentially a most valuable partner and ally to the school and the school system. There is therefore an important role for the Authority in engendering public confidence in the school system. But in a devolved-participative system, it is the confidence which each school individually engenders which is of greatest significance.

Our other reservations about the proposal include the lesser importance of credentialling in high schools compared with secondary colleges and the potentially complex administrative arrangements necessary. Furthermore, additional resources would be needed to establish and maintain such an accreditation system, thereby diverting resources within high schools away from their main charter. Thus, we do not endorse the proposal.

We reiterate, however, the notion to which we referred earlier, of school boards systematically involving teachers from other schools in the processes of course approval. This could include, where appropriate, teachers from primary schools or colleges. It would be more valuable if such teachers were from schools within the same local area within the framework of Local Education Networks. This would asist in fostering co-operative curriculum development and facilitate communication between teachers working in different sectors of education.

Another suggestion put to the Committee further reinforces the role of a school board in a devolved system. The school has substantial delegated responsibilities in curriculum, school organization and assessment. They have accountability to their community, to the Authority, and as part of a system, to the larger community of the ACT. It therefore seems appropriate that, in addition to having the responsibility for the approval of courses, there should be a requirement, similar to that of colleges, for the principal, as executive member of the board, to sign each year a document which indicates whether or not the courses as approved have been taught.

The Committee also considers that, whether there is less rapid turn over of future board membership or not, each high school board should maintain a list of approved courses indicating when each course was last formally evaluated.

Comprehensive Youth Policy

We affirm our belief that desirable educational provision can only be fully achieved in the context of a preferably national, comprehensive youth policy.

To make our meaning clear we refer to Professor Karmel's Radford Lecture 1979.

Summary

In this chapter we have looked at the ACT school system in its relationship with other agents of government and have concluded that in general, although there are some disadvantages in the need to relate to so many agencies, they are outweighed by the advantages. We have sounded a warning against allowing party politics to intrude, and have made some suggestions arising out of the various relationships.

There is considerable concern about the tensions that exist among the Authority, the Office and the schools, and the lack of knowledge that the various parts of the system have of one another. The recently introduced regional board meetings appear to be providing a valuable interchange of ideas and knowledge. We do not, however, favour a formal bureaucratic regional structure.

Curriculum support

We believe that more system support in the curriculum area is needed. We believe that schools in a system are interdependent rather than independent. The resources and expertise needed for thorough curriculum development are not normally found within a single school. The Authority has a duty to identify curriculum priorities and to support schools in adapting curricula to meet the new directions. This can be achieved without sacrificing the schools' ownership of their curriculum.

Accreditation

We believe that the requirement to submit programs for approval is valuable, particularly if schools make use of the occasion for thorough review. Similarly course approval by school boards if not undertaken in a token stic way, provides useful experience and real safeguards.

We refer to the suggestions we have made in Chapter 10. As a further safeguard we recommend that there should be a requirement for the principal to sign each year a document which indicates whether or not the courses as approved have been taught, and that each high school board should maintain a list of approved courses indicating when the course was last formally evaluated.

Consultants

We support the system of consultancy which is available to schools. However, we recommend that an examination should be made of the amount of time which consultants are able to devote to direct school assistance.

There is a case for appointment of additional curriculum consultants in specific areas which should be identified in collaboration with schools. The question of priorities has, of course, to be addressed in the light of resource limitations.

We recommend that in future consultants should be appointed for a fixed term.

We also recommend that some curriculum consultants should be appointed outside the normal subject structure in order to help with processes of learning, curriculum development and evaluation and effecting change.

We are impressed by the evaluation and research consultancy services provided.

Master Teachers

That these people provide a resource is not universally agreed to and so is not well used. We support the principle of master teachers but believe they should have a job and not just a status. We recommend that there should be a job specification and that it should include a responsibility for occupants to act as curriculum leaders. Some additional allowance of non-contact time should be made. Master teachers could be used for short term secondments as advisory/support staff. We also recommend that master teacher appointments should be made at the system level and for five year periods.

Guidance and Counselling

We endorse the Report of the Review of Guidance and Counselling but we caution against redeployment of existing resources. Additional resources will be needed to improve the service to primary schools.

Staff and Community Development

If change is to be brought about development programs for administrators, teachers and parents will be necessary. We have suggested four dimensions for that work.

We recommend that a high priority be given to professional development needs in high schools over the next three years and that additional funds be made available by the Authority for visits by external catalysts.

We further recommend that the Authority support a planned and properly resourced program of parent and citizen development, conducted co-operatively with schools and the ACT Council of P & C Associations, and including the development of a comprehensive kit of information on how the system operates.

Community Resources

We believe that the system and schools could expand their use of community resources both through excursions and by bringing outside resources into the school. We believe that schools should consider giving credit for study undertaken outside the school.

Structure

We support the present 7-4-2 structure and believe that it is generally successful. Nevertheless we believe that it is desirable to continue discussions about alternatives.

We commend the work being done to ease problems of transition between sectors. We hope that special staffing arrangements can be extended beyond the present pilot schemes, and suggest Local Education Networks as being useful in this area. They would also be valuable in overcoming the present isolation of schools by providing for information sharing.

We note that there is a lack of awareness of TAFE facilities among high school students, but that there is the beginnings of co-operation. We believe that there is scope for considerable co-operation and student movement between schools, colleges and TAFE.

We regret also the widespread lack of appreciation in the system of the fine work being done at the School Without Walls. We believe that such a facility should be retained but, that it should not be allowed to be seen as a centre for non-conformists. Other schools can learn much from the way relationships are developed at SWOW.

Any changes in education inevitably have resource implications, and in the next chapter we examine present resource provision and use, suggesting ways of covering future needs.

Introduction

We were asked to examine some questions concerning the provision of resources, with regard to the quantum provided for high schools, its relativity with other sectors of education which come within the ambit of the Schools Authority, and the effectiveness of the use of these resources. We have also been asked to comment on likely future resource needs.

In view of the level of expenditure devoted to education, both in absolute terms and as a proportion of government budgets or of the GNP relative to other expenditures, it is somewhat surprising that so little reliable management data is generally available in various education systems. This deficit has to some extent been overcome in recent years through initiatives taken by the Schools Commission and the Australian Education Council (AEC). The AEC commissioned the ACER to undertake on its behalf a study of Resource Allocation in the Government Schools of Australia and New Zealand (Staffing and Resources Study). The Schools Commission, in conjunction with most of the Australian government school systems, has undertaken a further study to determine the manner in which educational expenditure occurs in different educational systems. The first report of this Schools Resources Study provides a breakdown of educational expenditure in categories ranging from that which occurs in schools through to that which is external to school operations but is delivered directly to schools, to more general, out-of-school, administrative expenditure. The results of these two studies, insofar as they are relevant to this Review, are discussed later in this chapter. The AEC, through its Statistics Sub-Committee, has also been working progressively towards the development of a set of financial tables which will provide a consistent and reliable set of financial data which, in the longer term, will enable valid statements to be made about changes in resource allocation over time within a system and to make valid comparisons between expenditure across systems. The Committee welcomes these developments. It is only when reliable comparative data is available that sensible discussion on resource allocations in relation to resource needs can take place. Given the massive problems in establishing agreed definitions and in being able to extract the data required, one must be very hesitant in drawing conclusions from much of the data which is currently available. The problems are not as great but are still very real when one wishes to examine changes in expenditure levels over time even in a given system.

Distribution of school size has resource implications. As pointed out by McKenzie & Keeves (1981), such distribution is influenced by structural characteristics of the system. In the case of the ACT, these are the concentration of its high schools in an urban setting and their location as determined in the main during a rapid growth period, in an environment characterized by a much higher level of co-ordinated town planning and control than has been the normal pattern in Australia. Nevertheless, as with the best planning elsewhere, some of the planning assumptions have not remained valid. The implications of these

are considered later in the context of the effects of declining and fluctuating enrolments.

Due to the special characteristics of the ACT, including the separation of Years 7-10 from Years 11-12, there is not the same range of high school size one finds in other systems. Excluding the atypical SWOW, the range in February 1980 was from 552 to 944. By 1983, this had changed to a range from 318 to 1081 with the enrolments of ten of the schools between 600 and 850.

Since there is claimed to be an inverse relationship (although not linear) between school size and per student operating cost, the ACT system has the potential for a more effective utilization of its resources across its high schools than do other systems. The exact nature of the relationship is heavily dependent on the impact of salary costs as determined by the staffing formulae. Although this is examined in more detail later, it is worth noting at this stage that ACT high schools are somewhat atypical nationally in that a much bigger proportion of the staffing allocation is independent of enrolment. This means that, if this is sustained, per student operating costs will not show as great a decline as school size increases. Conversely, the relative cost increases as school enrolments decline are not as marked. Some ways of redistributing resources locked up in this process are considered later.

Public Expenditure on Schools

For the Schools Resources Study a broad guide to the relative expenditure of public funds per student in Australian government school systems except Queensland was obtained for the year 1978-79, by analysing all sources of funding, not only those provided directly through education systems.

This study provides a cross system basis for examining resource allocations. The study included all identifiable government contributions, not only those provided through the education authority. The data used are expressed in December quarter 1980 prices but are based on expenditure in the financial year 1978-79. The cost per student of government school education in the ACT was $1574 compared with a seven system average of $1344. The ACT figure was higher than for each of the other systems except NT. The high costs per student in the two territories were ascribed in the Report as

> "partly brought about by the relatively high salaries of teachers in the two systems and the smallness of the systems themselves. (It should be noted that teachers salaries in the Territories have not increased by the same proportion as in Australia generally since 1978-79). Other factors contributing to the high cost per student figures in the ACT are the high retention rate in Years 11-12 and the adoption of the principles of school based decision making and community involvement. The latter require additional relief from face to face teaching in order to facilitate such things as curriculum development and assessment at the school level".

TABLE 6 – GOVERNMENT SCHOOL SECTOR
PUBLIC EXPENDITURE PER STUDENT BY STATE (OR TERRITORY) 1978 – 79

State/Territory	Schools Costs	Educational Services	General Administration	Sub-Total	Subsidies to students & parents	TOTAL
	$	$	$	$	$	$
New South Wales	1 059	33	42	1 135	85	1 220
Victoria	1 268	43	42	1 353	51	1 404
South Australia	1 265	57	45	1 366	54	1 421
Western Australia	1 161	80	48	1 289	82	1 371
Tasmania	1 192	74	75	1 341	83	1 425
Australian Capital Territory	1 391	47	97	1 535	39	1 574
Northern Territory	1 838	112	272	2 222	130	2 352
SEVEN SYSTEMS	1 178	47	48	1 273	70	1 344

Source: Schools Resources Study Part One 1981 — Table GS2

The study dissected total costs per student into a number of components. The school level costs per student in primary schools in the ACT was $1 077 compared with a seven system average of $906. For secondary schools the ACT cost per student was $1 843 compared with a seven system average of $1 580. For primary education, only the NT cost was higher than the ACT. This was also the case for secondary schools except for Victorian Technical Schools.

It is useful to examine further the distribution of the system cost per student according to category of expenditure (Table 6).

This indicates that, excluding the NT, the ACT differs most significantly from the other systems in the expenditure ascribed to (a) general administration (b) subsidies to students and parents. The high level of expenditure on general administration is presumably a matter of scale. A small system necessarily has a minimum level of administrative overheads which will be proportionately larger than in large systems - approximately 6% of total expenditure per student compared with an average of 3.6% and 3.4% for the largest system, NSW.

The low level of subsidies to students and parents is attributable in this study to the small geographical size of the ACT and consequently reduced transport costs and hostel costs. Nevertheless, as discussed later, transport costs are a significant component of non-salary expenditure in the ACT.

Although there are variations from system to system, it is well established that the major allocation of the financial resources made available by governments to government schools is on salaries of staff, principally teaching staff in schools. For example, in 1978-79, a total of 75.9% of expenditure in the government school sector was on salaries and allowances for staff. (School Resources Study Part 1, Table GC3). This ranged from 66.4% in the NT to 80.6% in the ACT.

The salaries proportion in direct school costs was 80.8% nationally. In the ACT, the proportion was 83.4%. On a per student basis, the direct schools costs for staffing in the ACT were $1 122 compared with a seven systems average of $911.

It is worth noting however that the total school cost per student for the ACT Government schools sector, both direct and indirect of $1 391 were again higher than for all of the other systems except NT. This does not suggest that ACT schools are disadvantaged in the allocation of recurrent resources, if not on an absolute basis, then at least on a relative basis.

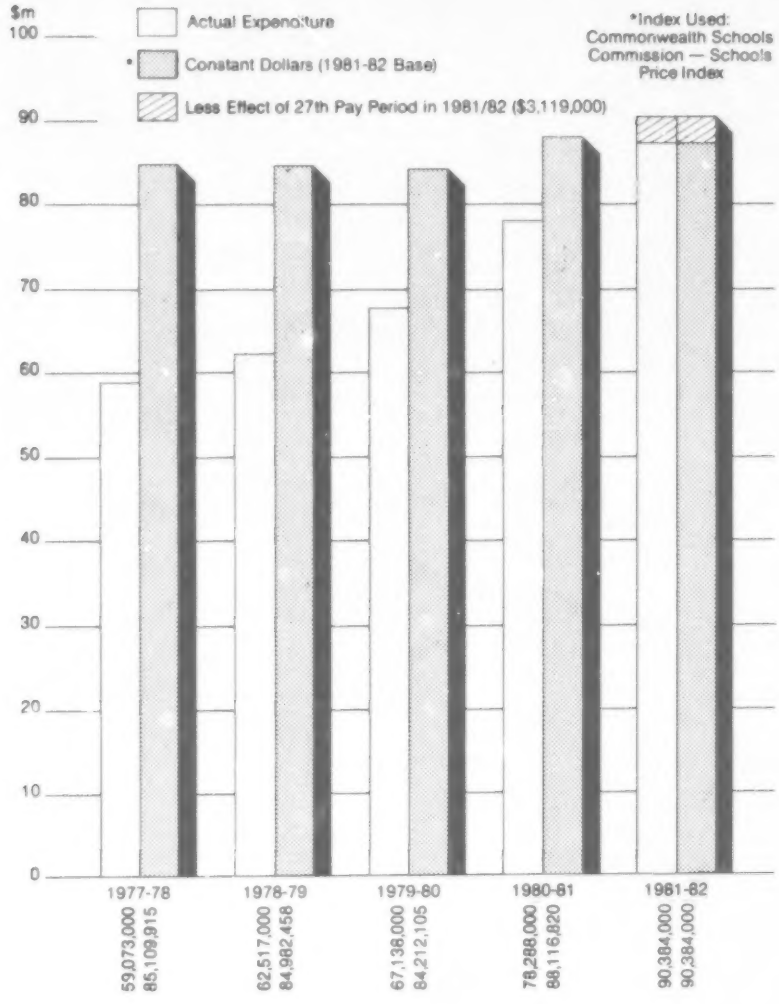


Figure 1
ACT Schools Authority
Commonwealth Government Appropriations for Expenditure
under the Schools Authority Ordinance 1976
1977–78 / 1981–82

Source: ACT Schools Authority, *Annual Report 1981-82*, 1983.

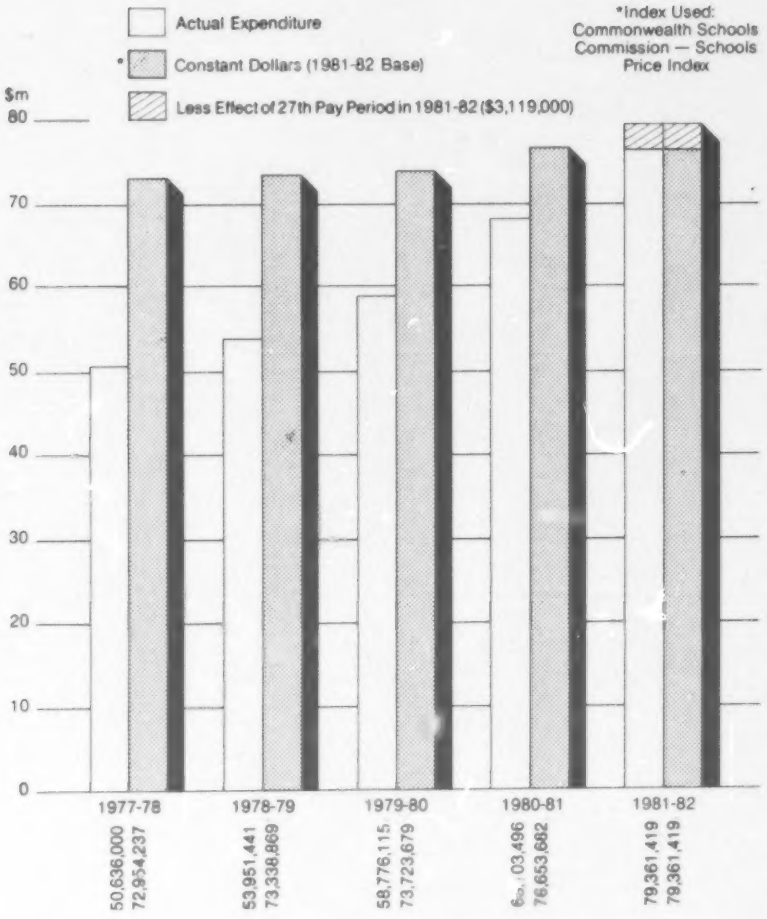


Figure 2
ACT Schools Authority Salaries Expenditure
1977–78 / 1981–82

Source: ACT Schools Authority, *Annual Report 1981-82*, 1983.

The annual variations in money appropriated directly to the Schools Authority under its ordinance are shown in Figure 1 and that of the salary component in Figure 2. In real terms, a decline in total appropriation from 1977-78 to 1979-80 was reversed in 1980-81 and further improvement occurred in 1981-82, contrary to widely held beliefs in schools.

Resource Allocation in the ACT

The majority of funds provided for the operation of schools in the ACT is provided to the Schools Authority by the Commonwealth Government under the Schools Authority Ordinance.

In addition resources are also made available through other government departments, and money is made available for special Commonwealth supported programs through Special Purpose Grants. A total of $813 600 was provided in 1981-82 for such programs, including English as a Second Language, Transition from School to Work, Multicultural Education and Professional Development. Some of these programs serve Government and non-government schools in the ACT.

Expenditure on salaries increased from 1977-78 through to 1981-82, and, with the exception of 1980-81, the proportion of total expenditure increased from 85.7% in 1977-78 to 87.8% in 1981-82.

It would appear that the corresponding reduction in non-salary expenditure over the years is the element which has caused problems for schools and has created the impression that there has been a cut-back in funding.

The non-salary resource for 1981-82 in total amounted to $11 268 455. Of this, $1 717 338 was allocated to schools directly as self managed discretionary funds, and $499 647 as credit allocations at the Authority warehouse. The remainder was used to provide support services to schools and for the general overhead costs of the system.

In addition to these Government provided resources, schools generated additional funds through the imposition of fees and through fund raising activities. Funds raised in these ways total over $1 000 000 per year.

Finally, the Authority is responsible for a relatively small amount of capital expenditure on buildings, works, plant and equipment, the amount expended in 1981-82 being $320 444. Additional to this expenditure is that undertaken by the National Capital Development Commission. This amounted to $2 450 000 in 1981-82 and is very much dependent on the demands of the forward building program.

It should also be noted, particularly in making comparisons with expenditure in apparently similar categories in other systems, that expenditure on a number of aspects of school operations, eg grounds maintenance, school cleaning, is the responsibility of

other Commonwealth agencies. A proportion of the costs attributed to operations of the ACT Schools Authority also relates to services provided jointly to both government and non-government schools. These aspects were, however, accommodated in the Schools Resources Study.

Expenditure in 1981-82 by the Department of the Capital Territory (now the Department of Territories and Local Government) on school grounds maintenance was $1 510 500, by the Department of Transport (now Housing) and Construction on repairs and maintenance was $1 580 000 and by the Department of Administrative Services on cleaning was $2 890 000.

A number of these aspects of resource allocation is now considered separately, with particular reference to high schools. In some areas, however, high schools cannot be isolated and the effects of any changes would need to be considered on a system basis.

Personnel Resources

Staffing in ACT schools is provided within Public Service Board determined ceilings, on the basis of a staffing formula introduced in 1980. The formula for each category of school includes four components with a different weight assigned to each component according to the school's category - primary, high or college. The Committee has been unable to discern any educational basis for the different weightings. It would appear that they have been derived by developing formulae to fit a status quo, thus incorporating historical differences which have developed as well as the differing needs perceived to exist in the more complex secondary institutions.

The four components are:

1. Fixed Component - To allow for administrative and non-teaching duties.

2. Variable Component - Providing additional Band 1 teachers. This component is proportional to enrolments but a different weighting for the three categories of schools is used.

3. Defined Needs Pool Component - This makes provision for certain defined needs on a formula basis to be met by allocating additional staff to schools.

4. System Needs Pool Component - This provides a reserve for the system to respond to special cases.

In developing the staff allocation to schools, notional provision is made for non-teaching time according to Band level and nature of the school. This is expressed relative to the Band 1 teaching load.

The primary and secondary figures are not comparable in that there is a difference between the equivalent field teaching load of a Band 1 primary and a Band 1 secondary teacher.

For primary schools with enrolments above 150, there is a specific band structure which is enrolment dependent.

Table 7 PRIMARY SCHOOLS - FIXED STAFFING COMPONENT

Estimated Enrolment	Band 4	Band 3	Band 2	Librarian	Fixed Component
Principal with teaching load					
150-173	-	1	1	1	1.61
174-275	-	1	2	1	1.78
Principal without teaching load					
150-158	-	1	1	1	2.17
159-275	-	1	2	1	2.34
Standard Primary Schools					
276-326	1	1	2	1	2.78
327-399	1	1	3	1	2.94
400-496	1	2	3	1	3.39
497-652	1	2	4	1	3.56
653+	1	2	5	1	3.72

Total staff = Fixed component + 0.037 x Enrolment

Once this is determined, the subtraction of the number of Bands 2-4 and librarian gives the number of Band 1 teachers to which the school is entitled in this component.

The formula provides for a 10% release from face to face teaching for a Band 1 teacher in primary schools. Band 2 teachers have 25% release and Band 3 assistant principals and principals (teaching) have 50% release. In secondary schools, a full teaching load for a Band 1 classroom teacher is 25 periods of 40 minutes per week. If one assumes a 1500 minute week, this represents a 33.3% release from face to face teaching. The formula is based on Band 2 secondary teachers having a further release of 25% of the Band 1 teacher load, giving a face to face load of 19 periods per week or nearly 50% release. Finally, the formula provides for assistant principals in secondary schools to have a teaching load of 13 periods per weeek or a release from face to face teaching of 65%.

TABLE 8 – COMPONENTS IN STAFFING FORMULAE – A.C.T. SCHOOLS

	Rural and Small Urban	Small Primary	Standard Primary	High	College
(1) Fixed Component	N/A	1.61 – 2.34 (enrolment 150–275)	2.78 – 3.72 (enrolment 276–653+)	8.20	8.20
(2) Variable Component	N/A	0.037E	0.037E	0.05962E' + Band 1 Band 2 for E' – 750 100 (to next integer)	0.07718E' + Band 1 Band 2 for E' – 600 80 (to next integer)
(3) Defined Needs Pool Component	N/A Staff are provided according to estimated enrolment. B2 B1 Total 0–27 – 1.2 1.2 28–54 1 1.5 2.5 55–81 1 2.8 3.8 82–108 1 3.8 4.8 109–135 1 4.8 5.8 136–149 1 5.9 6.9	(1) Remedial Reading 0.35 per school (2) Special Education Classes	(1) Remedial Reading 0.35 per school (2) Special Education Classes	(1) Special Education Classes (2) Slow Learners 0.04770 x slow learner enrolments. (3) Beginning teachers – 0.2 for each (4) Study Leave 0.02 x No. of Band 1	(1) Special Education Classes – (3) Beginning teachers – 0.2 for each (4) Study Leave 0.02 x No. of Band 1

E = Estimated second semester enrolment

E' = Feb Enrolment

* Limited in system to 10% of mainstream enrolments.

Assumptions are also made about class size in the formula. Average class sizes used are:

primary		30
high	Year 7-9	32
	Year 10	30
college		25

This staffing formula is currently being reviewed. The Committee considers that this review should reconsider assumptions about average class size, reassess the amount of release from face to face teaching for Band 2 teachers, and develop a formula which involves an enrolment component in the determination of the number of Band 2 and Band 3 positions for secondary schools.

Changes in Personnel Provision

There have been marked changes in the demand and provision for personnel resources over the last ten years.

Teaching Staff

Table 9 indicates the changes which have occurred in the provision of teachers in the ACT over a ten year period.

TABLE 9 – NUMBERS OF STUDENTS, TEACHERS (F.T.E.) & STUDENT/TEACHER RATIOS ACT SCHOOLS 1973 – 1981

PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Year	Enrolments ('000's)	Teachers	Student/Teacher Ratios
1973	19.9	731	26.9
1974	21.0	965	21.7
1975	22.4	1 120	20.0
1976	23.9	1 170	20.4
1977	24.7	1 237	20.0
1978	23.3	1 270	19.9
1979	24.8	1 250	19.9
1980	24.8	1273	19.5
1981	24.5	1 247	19.6

SECONDARY SCHOOLS

1973	10.5	592	17.8
1974	11.7	885	13.2
1975	12.8	1 054	12.1
1976	13.7	1 142	12.0
1977	14.2	1 204	11.8
1978	14.5	1 245	11.6
1979	14.5	1 247	11.6
1980	14.5	1 250	11.6
1981	14.7	1 253	11.7

Source: Staffing and Resources Study Report No. 1 Tables 4.3, 4.4, 4.5

Thus, while substantial decreases in the student teacher ratio occurred for a number of years, the ratios have levelled out in both primary and secondary schools. Nationally, the primary ratio in 1981 was better than NSW (22.1), Qld (20.9) and WA (21.5) but not as favourable as Vic (18.1), SA (27.4) or Tas (17.6). As pointed out earlier, however, the ACT does not have the staffing penalties of the States which, due to geographical dispersion, have a large number of small schools. The secondary school comparison in 1981 was that the ACT ratio was better than NSW (12.7), Qld (14.2) and WA (12.9) but again not as favourable as Vic (11.4), SA (11.5) or Tas (11.1).

There are dangers in making such comparisons because a number of structural differences are concealed in the aggregated data. One factor, to which reference has been made, is the distribution of school size. This should operate in favour of ACT schools. Another is differences in retention rates and the differential allocation of personnel resources between junior and upper secondary classes. The high retention rates to Years 11 and 12 in the ACT result in the allocation of a significant amount of resource in this area at the expense of Years 7-10. For example, in February 1981, 832.1 staff were allocated for 10 703 students in high schools and 398.1 staff for 4 383 students in secondary colleges (Annual Report 1980-81) giving student teacher ratios of 12.86 and 11.0 respectively.

Teacher Resource Use in Schools and Class Size

The matter of class size has been a sensitive issue now for many years. As shown in Table 9, there have been progressive increases over many years now in personnel available in schools, resulting in reductions in student/teacher ratios. This is not a good index of class size because other changes in personnel use have been occurring. This includes a larger number of teachers with substantial, if not total, release from face to face teaching - student counsellors, teacher librarians, careers co-ordinators, assistant principals. Furthermore, the needs of special groups - new arrivals, English as a Second Language, mainstreaming of the disabled, extension of music programs, result in small groups being established. Thus, a substantial increase in the number of personnel at a school may have little impact on the class size in most subject areas, particularly in what are commonly known in the ACT high schools as the "core subjects".

Information on class size is notoriously difficult to collect and analyse with an acceptable degree of reliability. Definitional problems abound. It is also a measure of resource use, availability or need which cannot be considered in isolation. It is often considered this way as an indicator of teacher loading.

We believe that it must at least also be considered in relation to the amount of release from face to face teaching, the actual length of the instructional day, the number of periods per week each group meets and the extent of support staff available.

Data on class or group size are not collected by the Authority on a comprehensive basis. Some indication is however provided by data collected on size of English classes in high schools from 1979-81.

TABLE 10
SIZE OF ENGLISH CLASSES, 1979-81

	less than 21		21 to 25		26 to 30		31 to 35		total	average group size
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
1979	94	21.6	106	24.4	194	44.6	41	9.4	435	24.4
1980	113	25.1	105	23.3	185	41.0	48	10.6	451	23.7
1981	84	19.3	131	30.0	178	40.8	43	9.9	436	24.4

Source: Selected School Statistics 1981.

There appears to be some movement towards an increase in the number of groups in the range 21-25 at the expense of both small and large size groups.

In an attempt to get at least some impression of how teachers as a personnel resource are distributed in high schools in the ACT, the Committee arranged for a survey to be carried out with the co-operation of five high schools.

Table 11 shows the range of class sizes across four subject areas but does not distinguish Year levels. It should be noted that:

1. Remediation in English and Mathematics is dealt with in Schools B, C and E by either withdrawal or the presence of a resource teacher. It is not dealt with by a policy of smaller classes for students of lower ability in either of these two subject areas.

2. Remediation in English and Mathematics in Schools A and D is dealt with primarily by a policy of smaller classes for slow learners. This occurs regardless of year level of students, but may be complemented by some withdrawal.

3. Class sizes across all schools in both Technology and Home Science are a function of space, student numbers and year level. Larger class sizes in these subject areas are more characteristic of Year 7 than other year levels.

4. In each of the schools Year 7 students undertake taster courses in Language, Art, Home Economics, Industrial Arts and Music. However, the approach to this varies. In some schools students study the subjects listed for a relatively short period of time in the week for the full year. In the other schools students rotate through these areas on a term or 1/2-semester basis. As a result while these subjects are usually compulsory not all students were studying them at the time of the survey.

5. Some of the figures given represent very small samples of the total school population and are thus not especially reliable as indicators of trends or priorities.

Table 11
Range of Class Sizes in each of the Five High Schools and in each of Four Subject Areas

Subject Area	School				
	A	B	C	D	E
English	15 - 35	24 - 29	25 - 32	15 - 32	25 - 30
Mathematics	15 - 35	24 - 29	25 - 32	15 - 34	25 - 30
Technology	15 - 29	17 - 20	15 - 20	15 - 20	14 - 20
Home Science	15 - 29	20 - 24	15 - 19	16 - 20	17 - 20

Other matters considered were:

* the time spent by students in particular subjects;

* the proportion of the student population studying in particular subject areas in each school;

* the proportion of the total teaching time available in each school allocated to each subject area;

* the average class size in subjects;

* the teacher time available to students in particular subjects for each hour of timetabled study.

While it is dangerous to generalize, it would be reasonable to suggest that the overall picture which emerges from the five schools would be reasonably representative of the 18 high schools in the system.

There are marked differences in the organizational arrangements. The sample included three schools with a five day time-table, one with 35 x 41 minute lessons, the second with 40 x 37 minute lessons and the other with 30 x 50 minute lessons. Another follows a 7 day cyclic time table with 42 lessons of 49 minutes each, the fifth also follows a 7 day cyclic but with 28 x 75 minute lessons.

Year 7 students in all of the five schools study a "common core", usually English, Mathematics, Science, Social Science (History/Geography) and Physical Education. In two schools, 14% of the total programmed time was devoted to each of these subjects, a total of 70% of the "core". In another school, a smaller proportion of time (11%) was devoted to Social Science and Physical Education. The fourth school maintained roughly the same distribution (13%) in four of the subjects but gave an increased proportion (17%) to Mathematics. In the fifth, the pattern was more variable: English (15%), Mathematics (12.5%), Science (12.5%), Social Science (20%), Physical Education (10%) which incidentally, is the same as that devoted to all other Year 7 subjects.

There is considerable variation among the schools in the way the rest of the Year 7 program is constructed and in the time allocated to different subject areas at a given time in the year. However, the same subject areas are included, viz Industrial Arts, Home Economics, Language, Art, Music. Although time allocated to Industrial Arts for example, appeared to vary from 4.6% (where language was a "core subject") to 17%, the average over a year worked out at about 5-6% for non-core subjects.

A surprising feature of the analysis is the time distribution across Years 7-10. Two schools have a high degree of consistency. One allocated 14% to everything, the other allocated 14% for English, Mathematics and Science at all levels; 6% for electives in Year 7; 11% for Social Science and Physical Education (Years 7-10) and all electives for Years 8-10.

This suggests that parity of esteem is seen largely in terms of equality of time provided. Another shows a variation from 14% for all core Years 7-10 subjects except for Physical Education where the allocation is 7% for Years 8-10.

The analysis makes us wonder about the extent to which the curriculum provided is developmental in nature, even allowing for the fact that development undoubtedly occurs within each of the subject areas. Such a gross picture also conceals the extent to which variation from an across the school pattern occurs within the individual programs of students as they elect to study different subjects as they progress through the school. The Committee does have some concerns that the extent of choice is in some instances very limited and students can become locked into a sequential program at an alarmingly early stage so that decisions

made in Year 7 predetermine students' courses for the next three years. While not wishing to advocate a free-for-all or a dipping into an educational smorgasbord according to passing whims and fancies, the Committee does consider that the early years in high school, while providing a good grounding in 'basics', should also be exploratory in nature.

One school was noteworthy in the range of electives available in Years 9 and 10.

The analysis of the proportion of teaching time allocated to each subject area and in each year group indicated that two schools devoted approximately 60% of time to "core subjects"; the other three devoted approximately 68% of time to this area. (This includes the school which provides a wide range of electives in Years 9 and 10) A further calculation was done to determine the extent to which teaching time allocated corresponded with the distribution of the student population by Year level. Not surprisingly, this indicated, with one exception at Year 7 level, that Years 9 and 10 received approximately 10% greater share at the expense of Years 7 and 8.

The total subject allocations across the five schools for the most common subjects expressed as a proportion of total teaching time are as shown:

Table 12
Proportion of Teaching Time by Subject

School Subject	A	B	C	D	E	
English	.123	.131	.125	.146	.219	(includes Social Science)
Mathematics	.132	.131	.125	.145	.132	
Science	.128	.131	.125	.132	.125	
Social Science	.099	.125	.157	.156	(included in English)	
Physical Ed.	.123	.084	.141	.104	.107	
Industrial Arts	.074	.102	.099	.092	.114	
Home Economics	.053	.066	.071	.072	.078	
Language	.042	.072	.048	.052	.034	
Art	.042	.018	.048	.033	.037	
Music	.021	.018	.045	.028	.029	

(The totals are less than 1.0 since not all subjects are included)

The table shows considerable variation across schools and from subject to subject, particularly in the "elective" area. Using this as a measure of personnel resources allocation, it is clear that Industrial Arts and Home Economics are allocated substantially more resources than Language, Art and Music. This presumably is a factor of student demand, time-table or course constraints and group size.

Another approach to resource utilization is to examine the number of teacher minutes theoretically allocated per student in each subject per hour of study. This calculation takes into account not only the time allocated but the group size.

These are tables on a whole school basis for each of the five schools:

Table 13
Teacher Minutes per Student per Hour of Study

School Subject	A	B	C	D	E
English	2.19	2.28	2.14	2.34	2.20*
Mathematics	2.36	2.28	2.14	2.42	2.20
Science	2.27	2.28	2.09	2.34	2.20
Social Science	2.19	2.20	2.31	2.70	*
Physical Ed.	2.74	2.58	2.42	2.50	2.33
Industrial Arts	3.25	3.18	3.25	3.12	3.43
Home Economics	3.06	2.73	3.59	3.43	3.33
Language	3.03	3.41	3.47	2.61	3.33
Art	2.77	4.04	2.70	3.06	3.03
Music	2.60	3.15	3.03	3.08	2.82

* School "E" incorporates English and Social Science in Humanities.

Within each school, the teacher resource available to students is clearly greater in some subjects than others, again reflecting the smaller group size of these subjects in Years 8-10.

Calculations were made of average class size, time weighted, for each year group and across the whole school. Little variation (less than 5) was shown across year levels in any of the five schools for the core subjects. Variation from school to school was also limited for these subjects. In other subject areas, the general pattern, as expected was for much smaller time weighted

average class sizes to occur. Within these 'elective' subject areas, there is a much greater variation in group size both within schools and between schools. It is clear that quite different policies of personnel resource have developed and it is difficult to generalize about class size. The Committee considers that in determining such policies, special consideration should be given to the needs of Year 7 students. If additional resources are available to bring about a reduction in class size, particularly in maintaining the staff ceiling when high school enrolments in the system start to decline, first priority should be given to the 'core' subjects. Unless substantial reductions are possible, however, we believe that both teachers and students would be better served by additional support services, particularly resource teachers.

Ancillary Staff

The basis on which ancillary staff is provided in ACT schools is as follows:

Primary Schools	2 + 1 or part thereof for every twelve teachers
Secondary Schools	6 + 1 or part thereof for every twelve teachers (with the provision of an additional 0.35 if evening classes are provided and 0.54 for a new school in its first two years of operation)

The two core positions in primary schools are devoted to the positions of janitor and clerical assistant (school secretary).

The provision of ancillary staff is being subject to a concurrent review and we have therefore not examined this matter in any detail. We observe, however, that there seems to be a marked disparity in providing a full time janitor in all schools other than rural schools, irrespective of size and enrolment trend.

The ancillary staff formula for high schools implies a greater degree of flexibility than exists in practice. Schools find themselves locked into a particular pattern in the use of these resources and there is limited scope for a school to respond to changing needs or changing enrolments. We do believe, however, that an individual review should be made of ancillary staff needs in each school as the opportunity arises when a vacancy occurs. We also believe that this is a responsibility that the school board should assume. This process would be facilitated if provision existed for permanent part-time work to be offered to ancillary staff.

In high schools, again irrespective of size, the fixed pattern is for the six core positions to be absorbed as registrar, janitor, school secretary, library assistant, laboratory assistant and general assistant.

Many submissions drew attention to the present allocation of ancillary staff and some concern was expressed that the present allocation between the various sections require revision. We note too the recommendations of the Primary School Review.

The ACT Schools Authority Annual Report 1980/81 indicates the following:

Table 14
PROVISION OF ANCILLARY STAFF, ACT, FEBRUARY 1981

	Students	Ancillary Staff	Pupils per Ancillary Staff
Pre School	4992	101.5	49:1
Primary	22954	252.8	91:1
High	10703	166.9	64:1
College	4383	78.0	56:1

The Committee accepts that there should be fewer students per ancillary staff member in pre-schools than in other sectors, but questions the need for such a large difference between the other sectors.

Ancillary staff are appointed to schools not to assist in teaching children but rather to free teachers from the routine tasks which prevent them from spending time in teaching. Clearly, since there are greater requirements to prepare science experiments, demonstrations, library resources, etc. in secondary schools, it can be argued that some additional teacher aide time is necessary at this level.

National figures do not separate enrolments into what ACT calls high school (Years 7 - 10) and secondary college (Years 11 - 12). Furthermore special education students are identified separately because their ancillary staff allocation is understandably more generous.

Comparing the figures below we can see that the provision of ancillary staff for primary students in the ACT is less generous than the national average and for secondary students and special students it is more generous than the national average. The difference between the national and the ACT secondary figures seems to be the result of a more generous allocation to colleges so it could be argued that any re-distribution to the primary sector should come from colleges not from high schools. We recommend that the Schools Authority consider this matter in the context of the Ancillary Staff Review.

Table 15
Provision of Ancillary Staff, Australia, 1981

	Number of Students	Number of Non-teaching Staff	Ancillary Staff per pupil
Primary	1,481,988	17,045	1:86.95
Secondary	829,744	13,195	1:62.88
Special	69,858	3,905	1:17.89

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, National Schools Collection, 1981

Table 16
Provision of Ancillary Staff, ACT, 1981

(Figures for the same period and based on same definitions as those in the table above)

	Number of Students	Number of Non-teaching Staff	Ancillary Staff per pupil
Primary	24 744	263	1:94.08
Secondary	14 873	254	1:58.56
Special	341	56	1:06.09

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, National Schools Collection, 1981

We also believe that this is one area in which there are opportunities for young people to gain valuable opportunities for work experience. It should be possible to allocate a proportion of the money devoted to the employment of ancillary staff for use in encouraging young people who are contemplating leaving high school to remain at high school, but at the same time to work part-time at a nearby pre-school, primary school, or indeed at the high school on a part-time basis as a teacher aide.

The fact that they may not be successful students in a narrow academic sense should not make them ineligible for such work. There is some evidence to suggest that such students can be of considerable use to younger children who are experiencing learning difficulties and that both gain from the experience of working together. It is heartening to note that 41 temporary positions have been created recently in ACT government schools with funds allocated to the Authority from Wages Pause savings and that some of these people are being used to work directly with students. This should be a good test for the idea and if it is successful we would recommend that the Schools Authority consider its extension to allow younger students to work part-time while at school.

Our attention was drawn to the demands placed on a new high school in establishing its library. There is certainly a need for supplementary ancillary staff to assist in the early phases of making the library operational. Failure to do so constitutes a severe disadvantage to students at a new school. It was suggested that to overcome this problem there should be a system library ancillary task force established. We believe that it would be hard to justify and maintain such a unit. As an alternative, we suggest that a more effective and more cost efficient approach would be to provide funding within the establishment grant structure for a school board to employ such assistance on a temporary basis.

Other Indices

Another way of examining resource allocations is to examine various staff/student ratios.

In July 1981, the total number of full-time students was 39 194. The number of FTE school staff (teaching and non-teaching staff) employed in all ACT schools in 1981 was 3 113 giving a ratio of 79.4 per thousand students. For Australia the ratio was 71.8. The number of non-school staff employed was 228 giving a ratio of 5.82 per thousand students compared with a national figure of 3.33. Preliminary figures indicate the respective 1982 figures for the ACT are 82.4 and 6.00 and for Australia, 76.3 and 3.69.

Although the ACT is ranked fourth (excluding the Northern Territory) in the overall provision of school staff per thousand students, the provision could be regarded at least as good as Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania when one takes into account the differential effects of staffing the considerable numbers of small rural schools in the States. The relatively high provision of non-school staff in the ACT on the other hand reflects the diseconomy of a small system.

Table 17
School and Non-School Staff Per 1 000 Students by State and Territory, Government Schools, 1981

July, 1981	School Staff (F.T.E)	Ratio per 1 000	Non-School Staff (F.T.E)	Ratio per 1 000
New South Wales	54 032	68.3	1 989	2.52
Victoria	48 187	81.0	1 705	2.87
Queensland	21 514	59.8	1 031	2.86
South Australia	17 617	82.7	816	3.83
Western Australia	14 540	70.2	878	4.23
Tasmania	5 824	82.6	617	8.75
Northern Territory	2 255	96.9	387	16.63
Australian Capital Territory	3 113	79.4	228	5.82

Source: Calculated from data available from Australian Bureau of Statistics, National Schools Collection 1981.

A further national comparison for 1979 can be made by dividing school staff into support staff and teaching staff.

Support staff figures for 1979, taken from a survey (Ainley, 1982) of schools as mean numbers of staff per thousand students are as follows:

ACT (High)	15.1
(College)	19.0
New South Wales	13.4
Victoria (High)	9.7
(Technical)	11.4
Queensland	10.7
South Australia	13.7
Western Australia	11.4
Tasmania (High)	14.7
(College)	20.0

Source: Table 3.12 Staffing and Resources Study Report No. 2

For teaching staff, the mean numbers of staff per 1000 students in 1979 were:

ACT (High)	83
(College)	100
New South Wales	73
Victoria (High)	89
(Technical)	111
Queensland	72
South Australia	82
Western Australia	72
Tasmania (High)	75
(College)	88

Source: Table 3.14 Staffing and Resources Study Report No. 2

Unlike the National Schools Collection data, these survey data distinguish between high schools and colleges. Excluding the ACT Colleges, Victorian Technical Schools and Tasmanian Senior Colleges, the ACT ratio compares favourably with other States, particularly when it is realized that the ratio for other States includes the more generous staffing provision made in Years 11 and 12.

On the other hand, allowance must be made for the level of school based curriculum development expected in the ACT, together with the impact of peer assessment.

This national comparison shows that the ACT, SA, Victoria and Tasmania engage substantially more total personnel per 1000 students than do other States. Again, this is at least partly a question of economy of scale but, as pointed out by McKenzie and Keeves (1982) the relationship is not a linear one. The 1979 enrolment in NSW was more than twenty times that of the ACT but the number of non-school based personnel was less than eight times that applying in the ACT. Again, it is hard to conclude that, relative to other systems, ACT schools are poorly resourced. Even so, whether the total level of resourcing is adequate is another question. So too are issues of the distribution of resources among the various sectors and the usage of resources within the system and within schools. It is also important to examine the total resource provision available to schools and not to concentrate on individual components in isolation. Thus, the provision of ancillary staff must be considered in conjunction with that of teaching staff and support services external to the school if an accurate picture is to be obtained.

Resource Provision Among Sectors

There are clearly differences in the distribution of personnel resources among colleges, high schools and primary schools. The staffing formulae for teaching staff are different and the provision of ancillary staff also differs. In 1979, for example, the ratio of staff in the ACT high schools to that in primary schools per 1000 students was 1.63 and that for support staff was 1.67. These differences arise from:

1. increased provision of specialist teaching staff in high schools for the more extensive curriculum;

2. the provision of teachers with a very high provision for non-contact time eg, school counsellors;

3. smaller average class sizes;

4. higher level of non-contact time;

The staffing formulae make specific provision for these differences.

Criticism has been levelled in some submissions about resource allocation which enables colleges to have the smallest pupil teacher rates. It is argued that, students being more mature and independent in their learning, larger groups could be tolerated. A large measure of self discipline and independence reduces the need for teacher control and there is less stress than in coping with a high school group of a similar size. On the other hand, the need to provide a wide range of courses to give students a wide option necessitates small classes and this reduces the overall pupil teacher ratio. It seems to the Committee that this latter argument, often used to explain the high proportion of resources which are allocated to Years 11 and 12 in neighbourhood high schools in other systems, has less validity when applied to the colleges as they are distributed as regional facilities in Canberra. The Committee is persuaded that there may be a case for re-distribution of teaching resources away from colleges and to high and primary schools. It recognizes that such a move would be opposed by the colleges and by the Teachers Federation, which, in arguing for additional resources for high and primary schools has stressed that this should not be at the expense of other sectors. A reduction in the disparity between distribution of resources within the secondary sector would probably go a long way towards removing the present disinclination of secondary college staff to apply for positions in high schools. The more generous staffing provisions seem to allow for the colleges separately and jointly to engage in effective curriculum development. High schools, on the other hand, do not seem to have either the time nor sufficient external resources to be able to undertake the tasks that are required.

Some of the factors leading to the differences in resource allocation are undoubtedly a result of the nature of the curriculum and consequent differences in organizational structures. Some, such as the level of provision of non-contact time, have a traditional component as well. The Committee considers that some re-distribution of resources between the sectors would be appropriate. This could be achieved by increasing the student teacher ratio in colleges, and injecting this released resource into the high and primary sectors. The Committee believes that some at least of the additional resource it considers necessary in the high school sector could be released from within that sector through a re-distribution of functions. Some avenues are discussed later in the chapter.

Beginning Teacher Allowance

Teachers in their first year of teaching need special consideration. In the ACT system the professional needs of beginning teachers have been recognized by a reduced teaching load in their first year of teaching. The current staffing formula provides for 0.2 teachers for each beginning teacher in a high school. The way in which the formula operates, however, is to provide a system-wide staffing estimate for beginning teacher allowance. If this is exceeded then the provision of the allowance to additional beginning teachers lapses.

As a result, some beginning teachers who take up positions in ACT high schools, particularly during the school year, are denied this allowance. This means that temporary teachers taking up their first position are sometimes offered a position with the proviso that they do not claim their beginning teacher allowance.

The Committee commends the provision of the beginning teacher allowance, which allows all beginning teachers to gain an automatic entitlement to a reduced face to face teaching load in their first year of teaching. It urges that every effort should be made to ensure that financial provision is made to ensure that the scheme continues and that all beginning teachers are given the assistance it affords.

Provision of Relief Teachers

The absence of teachers from duty is covered in the short term by the engagement of casual relief teachers. This occurs for day-to-day leave taken by regular teachers such as sick leave, jury or court leave, short study leave or pending the appointment of a temporary teacher to cover longer periods of leave. Temporary teachers are appointed to cover long service leave, maternity leave, longer periods of study leave, or extended periods of leave without pay. In the last instance, approval is limited to a fixed percentage of the staff ceiling (7.5% in 1982).

Relief teacher provision for in-service is not provided on an individual case basis in secondary schools. A special provision to cover staff absences is built into the staffing formula, with a study leave allowance of 0.02 provided for each Band 1 teacher at the school. In 1983, 14.6 teachers were distributed to high schools to cover study leave, including in-service and part-time study. The same provisions apply to colleges with 6.7 teachers being provided to cover study leave.

Different procedures apply to primary schools for study leave. A course has to be approved by the principal and then relief is applied for. Primary schools get relief for in-service based on the number of teachers, roughly half a day per teacher per semester.

Provision for teacher relief is also allocated to cover system-wide requirements of a special project nature. These relief days are not formula generated but a budget is provided. Sections estimate the number of days they will need on the basis of past usage and future foreseeable needs. The staffing section, through the finance section, then makes a submission to the Department of Finance for funds to pay for the relief days needed.

In 1983, 3 000 days were obtained which were allocated to primary schools and within the Office for special projects. The following are examples of this type of allocation:

Curriculum Consultancy	50 days
High School Program Approval	15 days
Evaluation and Research	65 days.

The Committee endorses the concept of making provision for teacher relief to enable schools to engage in curriculum development and in evaluation activities. If the level of co-operative curriculum development among schools and with the system support we have advocated is to occur, additional provision for relief days will be necessary. Similar considerations apply to school based evaluation. We believe that some at least of this resource for high schools could be obtained by retaining the allocation for study leave as part of the Defined Needs Pool rather than allocating it as part of the yearly staff allocation for each school where it can tend to be siphoned off to other activities. Such a resource should be available when required to meet specific needs rather than distributed uniformly throughout the year and across all schools. We believe that this would be a more visible, more effective and more efficient expression of system support to high schools than present practice and recommend accordingly.

Changes in the Role of High Schools - Resource Implications

In earlier chapters, a number of suggestions are made about changes we consider are significant if high schools are to adapt to the needs of students in the eighties. The most significant changes needed are in attitudes and in interpersonal relationships. Others involve changes in structure and in curriculum.

We believe that there is already a reservoir of energy and commitment among teachers who are involved in a wide range of curriculum development. We also believe that, while retaining the responsibility at school level for the programs delivered, there could be a substantial saving in effort if

1. more assistance was provided through the Office in the way of curriculum guidelines

2. there was more inter-school co-operative curriculum development.

For this to be effective, some additional resources would be needed for curriculum needs. We believe that, through a review of the high school staffing formula, it would be possible over time for such resources to be made available without a necessary net increase in overall staff.

We have suggested elsewhere that it would be more productive for such a resource to be available in a systems pool than for it to be allocated across individual schools through the staffing formula, as is done currently with an allowance for study leave.

Such a scheme would enable a substantial amount of curriculum development to be achieved on a team basis. It would also indicate to the community a high level of professional commitment and it would reduce some of the stress currently placed on those who are at present bearing the brunt of this work.

We draw attention to another potential resource which we understand is not fully utilized. This is the provision for a school board to be able to apply for two pupil free days annually. We believe that the procedure involves gaining the approval of a majority of the parents of students attending the school. We suggest that, subject to certain provisos on advance notice to parents and making adequate provision for students whose parents are unable or unwilling to have their children cared for on pupil-free days, a school board should have the power within agreed system guidelines, to declare pupil-free days for planning purposes. We believe that the present requirement of giving parents and pupils the opportunity to take part in the planning should be continued. In fact we go further and say that schools have a duty to encourage them to take part. This is the basic reason for pupil-free days. The board would, of course, need to be satisfied that an appropriate program was arranged for such days.

Professional Development Needs

If the changes in high schools we have advocated are to take place, a high priority will have to be given to the professional development needs of teachers.

This can be approached in a number of ways. First is the need to recognize that the extent of change necessary cannot be superimposed externally. A high priority will be to ensure that high schools collectively and individually own the problem, recognize the need to change and become involved in developing strategies for the change process. In the initial stages at least, there will be a need for a skilled team or project group to establish rapport with the schools and to develop strategies for change.

The establishment of such a group is envisaged in the Project Youth proposal under consideration by the Schools Commission and in which the ACT is involved. If funding is not forthcoming from this source, we believe that the project is sufficiently central to effecting changes as proposed in this Review that the ACT Schools Authority should identify from within its current resources the necessary funding.

We suggest two avenues which could be explored. One is the group of master teachers in high schools, some of whom we believe are not being expected to undertake responsibilities appropriate to their skills and status.

Obviously not all of these people have either the competence nor the wish to undertake advisory work, and some who would be willing to do so would need an opportunity to undertake a course to sharpen their skills. Such an opportunity could be provided and the Committee believes that resources used for this purpose would be well spent.

The second source of expert personnel are the teachers and senior staff in schools where enrolments are declining. It is clear that the Authority has not only a right but indeed an obligation to ensure that as enrolments decline the staffing of schools should be reduced accordingly together with a proportionate decrease in the numbers of senior and ancillary staff.

Non-Salary Expenditure

Table 18 gives a detailed analysis of non-salary operational expenditure, including capital expenditure, for the Schools Authority for 1981-82. A significant proportion of expenditure (47.4%) is classified under administration, a great deal of which is in this category because it is impossible to apportion it to specific sectors. A major component of this is expenditure on school transport - $ 3 594 190, being 67% of the total classified as administration. The administration category also includes service to non-Government schools and children.

Non-salary expenditure per student which is clearly ascribed to college, high or primary schools is $259, $178, and $117 respectively. In addition, there is a system-wide non-allocated expenditure of $140 per student, which as explained above, includes a high component for transport.

It is therefore difficult to assess the real levels of expenditure per student in the different sectors. The differential effect is, however, clearly evident in the disbursement of self management funds.

TABLE 18 – ACTUAL EXPENDITURE 1981–82 ALLOCATED BY SECTOR

ITEM		ADMIN[1] $	COLLEGES $	HIGHS[2] $	PRIMARIES[3] $	PRES $	TOTAL $
ADMINISTRATION EXPENSES							
Categories 20 – 36 [4]		1 152 278.37					1 152 278.37
Category 50							
01	Vacation Activity Centres			579.28			579.28
02	Sundry Freight	33 462.28					33 462.28
03	Public Relations (B Price)	1 105.35					1 105.35
04	Grants to Educ. Bodies	80 562.83					80 562.83
05	Reimb. Study Expenses	12 539.41					12 539.41
06	Stewart House – Transport	270.00					270.00
09	Special Swimming Classes				1,174.89		1,174.89
10	Outdoor Education Program				5 519.46		5 519.46
11	Maintenance of School Grounds				2 130.00		2 130.00
12	Advertising	17 120.87					17 120.87
13	Medical Exams	1 313.00					1 313.00
14	Compensation	103 307.00					103 307.00
15	Damage Clothing & Effects	807.62					807.62
16	Removal & Storage Expenses	9 476.46					9 476.46
17	Security Services	21 123.31					21 123.31
18	Seminar & Conf. Reg. Fees	6 631.00					6 631.00
19	International Baccalaureate		3 300.00				3 300.00
20	Cleaning Hydrotherapy Pools				11 277.35		11 277.35
21	Payroll Enveloping	1 646.96					1 646.96
22	Braille Library			1 902.80			1 902.80
24	Home Science – Handicapped			8 124.33			8 124.33
Sub-Categories 25–96 [5]		180 698.56					180 698.56
SUB TOTAL							
Administration Expenses		**1 622 343.01**	**3 300.00**	**10 606.41**	**20 101.70**		**1 656 351.12**
OTHER SERVICES							
53	School transport (urban)[6]	3 227 512.04					3 227 512.04
56	School transport (rural)[6]	366 678.76					366 678.76
80	**Schools Administration**						
01	Self Management Funds		278 798.00	621 811.00	816 729.00		1 717 338.00
02	Warehouse Issues		11%	31%	56%	2%	
03	Schools Controllable Items	1 364.00			11 033.89		12 397.89
04	Pre Schools					44 543.66	44 543.66
06	Budgeting & Accounting	700.00			1 100.00 CR		400.00 CR
07	Estab. Supplies - New Schools				23 878.29		23 878.29
08	Revote from Previous Year		9 224.04	21 401.80	43 325.75	1 779.68	75 731.07
09	School Debits				97.00		97.00
10	Waste Collection		9 601.85	20 034.15	43 957.10		73 592.90
11	Telephone Accounts (Incl. Recoveries)		43 448.08	74 451.48	94 322.22	15 913.22	228 135.00
14	Private Lines to Fire Stations		2 735.08	5 924.96	18 119.41	2 823.65	29 603.10
15	Heating – Diesel Oil		185 831.61	283 165.26	460 630.51		929 627.38
16	Heating – Domestic Oil		501.91	595.80	2 683.04	22 129.47	25 910.22
17	Heating – Gas					1 455.88	1 455.88
18	Electricity		207 782.22	352 421.83	424 152.97	85 935.50	1 050 292.52
20	Water Rates (Incl Excess)		5 890.42	15 565.32	54 576.96	4 363.48	80 196.18
21	MVA Relief Teachers				391.23		391.23
22	School Board Admin. Costs		1 934.04	3 929.52	16 699.17		22 562.73
23	Pest Control (Contract)		1 844.36	2 506.95	3 565.81	3 660.38	11 577.50
26	Hire Sanitary Disposal Units		6 063.68	16 405.02	31 704.36	1 003.20	55 176.26
26	Clocks (Daylight Saving Adj.)		480.00	1 120.00	3 080.00		4 680.00
27	Minor Furn. & Fittings Maint.	576.40	853.50	4 091.22	4 037.78	90.00	9 648.90
28	Special Buses (Swimming)				25 938.80		25 938.80
29	Reimbursement (Pine Ridge)			1 280.00			1 280.00
30	Replacement Stolen Items		1 000.00CR	3 397.22	5 740.00		8 137.42

TABLE 18 – ACTUAL EXPENDITURE 1981–82 ALLOCATED BY SECTOR

ITEM		ADMIN[1] $	COLLEGES $	HIGHS[2] $	PRIMARIES[3] $	PRES $	TOTAL $
35	PE Equipment Subsidy		131.25	906.93	2 530.24		3 567.42
40	Birrigai				25 755.33		25 755.33
41	SWOW		3 090.00				3 090.00
50	Warehouse Operations		64 668.35	150 043.30	303 750.09	12 477.06	530 938.80
70	Electrical Maint. (ACTEA)		45 501.34	125 403.00	107 431.39	8 006.88	286 342.61
71	Repairs & Maint. School Equip	15 000.00	10 508.69	21 691.19	385.00		47 584.88
75	Pest Control (Contingency)		59.30	80.61	114.65	117.69	372.25
80	Extraordinary Damage	21 352.83	4 324.53	7 749.06	10 827.06	747.00	45 000.27
90	Intercom/PA Systems				10 913.33		10 913.33
95	O/S Committees B/F	44 785.06	9 070.26	16 252.87	22 706.71	1 568.77	94 383.66
SUB TOTAL							
Category 59		**83 778.08**	**891 142.31**	**1 750 227.28**	**2 587 979.29**	**186 624.52**	**5 479 751.48**
66	Curriculum Devel. Projects		10 990.67	9 783.93	3 923.93	3 348.90	28 047.43
68	Furniture and Fittings	18 539.68	48 617.96	130 280.33	151 082.44	1 972.64	350 493.04
71	Student Assessment		38 181.71				38 181.71
77	Payments to NSW Dept of Ed	2 333.34	3 635.23	11 081.81	3 820.61		20 870.99
80	Computer Services	45 809.57	53 338.57	1 147.87	273.00		100 569.01
SUB TOTAL							
Other Services		**3 744 661.47**	**1 045 906.44**	**1 902 521.22**	**2 727 079.27**	**191 948.06**	**9 612 104.46**
SUB TOTAL							
Operational Expenditure							
(Excluding Salaries)		**5 366 944.48**	**1 049 206.44**	**1 913 127.83**	**2 747 180.97**	**191 948.06**	**11 268 455.58**
CAPITAL EXPENDITURE							
Plant & Equipment							
96	Plant & Equipment	131 468.72	64 378.48	93 973.94	30 622.50		320 443.64
GRAND TOTAL		**5 498 463.20**	**1 113 584.92**	**1 996 485.16**	**2 788 409.88**	**191 948.06**	**11 588 899.22**
Percentage		47.4%	10%	17%	24%	1.6%	

NOTES

1 Includes all central office expenses and some categories that are not divisible.
2 Includes Woden Special School and special classes in high schools.
3 Includes special primary schools and Birrigai Outdoor School.
4 Includes travelling and subsistence, office requisites, postage & telephone, rent, etc.
5 Includes ADP Payroll Service Fee, litigation costs, Specialist supplies used system wide, etc.
6 Includes services to non-government school children.

Self Management Funds

A proportion of the total recurrent funds available to the Schools Authority is paid to schools. Each school manages these funds according to a budget determined by the school board in consultation with school staff. This discretionary expenditure covers school supplies and materials, library supplies, text books, minor maintenance and repairs. From information provided to the Committee, the amount provided for high schools appears to be of the order of $35 000-$40 000 and for primary schools the amount is less than half of this figure. For 1980-81, the respective allocation for student provision was primary $48.17, high $72.13, college $80.30.

The amounts provided for self management funds (including credit allocations for the issue of stores from the Authority warehouse) over the last three financial years expressed in actual and constant dollars (1981-82 base) are as shown.

Table 19
Provision of Self-Management Funds in Actual and Constant Dollars
(Including Warehouse Credits)

	1979-80		1980-81		1981-82	
	Actual	Constant*	Actual	Constant	Actual	Constant
Primary	1 049 737	1 316 790	1 077 847	1 213 117	1 101 183	1 101 183
High	610 159	765 383	635 334	715 068	778 698	778 698
Colleges	284 738	357 175	305 193	343 495	337 104	337 104

* Using Commonwealth Schools Commission - Schools Price Index (National)

In making comparisons one must take into account

1. the establishment of new schools.
2. variations in funds provided to individual schools as a result of growth in some and decline in others.
3. increases caused by additional categories of devolution to schools.

Thus, it is difficult to use this system level data to indicate what changes have occurred in this element of resource provision to schools.

There are differences among the various school sectors in the level of financial support provided for self-management funds. The per capita general allocation rate in 1982 for secondary was $39.60; that for primary was $35.30.

Colleges and high schools receive $8.20 and $8.00 per capita for electrical equipment maintenance and primaries $5.00.

There is, however, a common provision for:

* school board expenses - $300.00;

* discretionary buses - $3.50 per capita;

* library maintenance - $5.00 per capita;

Minor building maintenance is determined by the age and size of the building. Secondary schools also receive a secondary textbook allowance on a per capita sliding scale basis from $8.00 in Years 7 and 8 to $20.00 in Years 11 and 12. Special provisions are made for schools with an enrolment less than 276 pupils.

For newly established schools, different loadings for colleges, high and primary are used, reflecting the cost of providing a bigger range of expensive equipment for more senior students. The approach used appears to the Committee to be a sound one, provided the real value of the money is maintained. The Committee particularly endorses the notion of providing additional resources during the first 3-5 years of growth of the school. Averaging of July enrolments and February projected enrolments has the advantage of providing a growing school with some additional resources and softening the impact on a declining school. A growth school is nevertheless placed in some difficulties since it must provide resources for the full number of students, not the average number, even though the period with higher enrolments is only five months. It would assist both growing and declining schools if the higher of February or July enrolments were weighted by, say, a factor of 2, before averaging the figures.

We have had it put to us very strongly that the current level of provision of self management funds is inadequate in that insufficient indexation is allowed for inflation, and per capita costs are rising in schools with a declining enrolment base. This is having the effect of forcing schools to raise additional revenue directly from parents through fees and through fund raising activities. There have been a number of concerns expressed about this. Firstly, it is claimed that, as far as essential requisites of schools are concerned, Government schools should be fully maintained and school-generated revenue should be for 'extras'.

Thus it is considered that school-generated revenue should not, by default, be used to cover deficits in funding from the Government. Secondly, absorption of such funds into normal operational expenditure precludes a school from undertaking new initiatives and expanding its resources in line with parental expectations. Thirdly, growing resentment within the parent

community of the absorption of school generated funds into normal operational expenditure is affecting the capacity of schools to raise funds. Finally, fund raising capacity in many schools is reduced by declining enrolments and by the deteriorating economic circumstances of many parents. These concerns have been expressed to us by individuals, principals, school boards, the Teachers Federation and the A.C.T. Council of Parents and Citizens Associations.

A particular concern is the level of funding provided for the library and for text books. We understand that this component has not been increased since 1975. Problems are also experienced in replacing worn out and obsolete equipment and in providing new equipment to keep pace with changes in technology. We were given one example of a high school in which voluntary contributions from parents account for 42% of the school's total income.

The Committee is concerned with the erosion in the relative purchasing power of moneys allocated to schools for self-management purposes. It welcomes the current study being undertaken of self-management funds. Particular attention should be given to:

* the level of per capita grants for library books and text books;

* the level of funding provision for repairs and maintenance expenditure.

On the basis of this review the Committee recommends that the Authority seek funding at a level sufficient for schools to be able to ensure that parental contributions would, in accordance with the Authority's wish, and as stated in its Policy on Parental Involvement in School Funding, be used to "provide for curriculum enrichment". We also recommend that specific provision be made for Authority funds to be indexed at an appropriate rate to prevent their continual erosion in value through inflation.

Concern was expressed to the Committee about the Schools Authority Policy on Parental Involvement in School Funding. This concern related to the process of development of the policy, the content itself and the perceived failure of the Authority to come to grips with the dilemma in which schools are being placed in making up what they see as a deficit in government funding by raising an increasing proportion of funds from parental sources, not for "curriculum enrichment" but for basic curriculum and operational school needs. We have commented elsewhere on other consultative practices which have received criticism, both in the approach and in the time provided for consultation to occur (although in this particular case the matter has been considered at more than twenty Authority meetings). This criticism suggests to us that the Authority should review its approaches to consultation given that policies will be criticized by those with whom they are unpopular on the grounds of process as much as substance.

Given the assumption that parental funding should be truly supplementary in a public system, we have no quarrel with the policy statement per se. It is a responsible exercise of the power of the Authority to ensure some coherence in the system, to provide guidelines to school boards and to ensure that adequate accountability requirements are being met.

Physical Facilities

The Committee has seen no need to make any substantial comment on the provision of new facilities for ACT schools. Well established practices of planning and construction jointly developed by the ACT Schools Authority and various Commonwealth bodies exist and have been effective in providing appropriate facilities when and where needed. Later in this chapter we comment on a need for additional planning flexibility if adequate responses are to be made to changing demographic factors.

Inevitably, we have become aware of criticisms in design and other factors. We believe that these matters are better addressed directly by the Schools Authority through its discussions with teachers and the NCDC rather than through any contribution the Review Committee can make.

The Committee does, however, suggest that, while it would want to see the maximum flexibility maintained to enable teaching/learning spaces of various sizes to be created according to changing needs, the extent of totally open space provided in general learning areas in recent schools, imposes a lack of flexibility in the operation of those areas. This can become a particular concern in that new schools are established in newly developing areas, with which can be associated a relatively unstable social environment. We suggest that building design should be reviewed before plans for the next high school are drawn up.

Our attention was drawn to matters of management and maintenance of facilities.

In the ACT this is a more complex matter than in State educational systems due to the number of agencies involved in the provision and maintenance of facilities. Cleaning is carried out through the Department of Administrative Services. School ground maintenance is carried out by the Department of the Territories and Local Government. The Department of Housing and Construction is responsible for repairs and maintenance of school buildings and plant. The National Capital Development Commission (NCDC) has the responsibility for buildings and works. The Schools Authority is responsible for the provision, maintenance and replacement of school equipment, while schools are provided with funds to cope with minor maintenance and repairs.

Although some difficulties in working with such a range of agencies have been identified, the Committee believes that on balance, little would be gained in the ACT by the Schools Authority taking over the responsibilities undertaken by other agencies, other than the responsibility for setting of fees for school use by community groups. The Committee does consider, however, that if responsiblity for lighting and heating costs is devolved to schools, the matter of the employment and supervision of cleaning staff would need to be examined.

The Committee is impressed by the extent to which the grounds of schools are regarded and are used as community facilities. It believes that this attitude is assisted by the schools not having the responsibility for maintenance of these areas. Such use does, however, increase the wear and tear on equipment and it involves schools in extra expenditure which we are told is increasingly being passed on to parents. This reinforces our view that, where costs are incurred by a school, the school board should, within guidelines, have the responsibility of setting fees and recouping charges made instead of the Schools Office.

A further facilities matter worthy of note is that of an increasing deficit between the standard of facilities provided in a new high school and that enjoyed by high schools built many years ago. Again, this problem is not peculiar to high schools nor to the ACT. In many ways it is insoluble and is accepted as a fact of life. It should not be so when lack of facilities limits educational opportunities. In such instances, some options should be available to make up the deficit progressively or to assist established schools in so doing. In some systems, the opportunity arises as part of a major upgrading, or through a subsidy scheme, the ability of a school board/council to borrow money or agreements by the system, school, local government or local groups to provide a facility on a joint funding basis. Clearly, not all are appropriate in the ACT. The Committee does suggest however, that there would be value in the Authority examining whether it would be appropriate for school boards to have the power to borrow money and thereby to distribute the associated costs over a number of years rather than to expect present parents to make disproportionate contributions. It can be validly argued that governments should meet the costs of providing such educational facilities. The argument is equally valid in all States. If such capital funds are not available, the question is whether such building deficits should be accepted or alternative, albeit less attractive, strategies used. The Committee believes that where educational needs are not being met, alternative funding strategies should be investigated.

Discussion in schools, observations by the Committee and submissions made by a number of groups indicated a growing concern about problems of maintaining school buildings, upgrading older buildings and coping with the maintenance, replacement and upgrading of equipment. Many of these concerns raised matters of safety particularly in various practical activities such as Industrial Arts, Home Economics, Science and Physical Education.

There is a danger associated with poorly maintained and faulty indoor and outdoor Physical Education equipment. There is no effective policy about this, leaving principals and high schools responsible for inspection of such equipment. A central policy is needed to ensure the maintenance and repair of Physical Education equipment.

Observation in schools has indicated hazards in the general environment as well as those associated with specialist areas. Most ceramic, textile, woodwork, metalwork, cookery and science areas have hazards of operation where action is needed to eliminate atmospheric pollution and physical dangers.

While high school students receive formal safety teaching and testing in practical classes there is a need for providing safety education for students in all areas of teaching to promote a safety conscious attitude.

Attention was also drawn to what were seen as aesthetically and educationally unsatisfying aspects of the buildings in some of the high schools.

Problems of poor heating, cooling and ventilation generally were raised as were accoustic problems caused by inadequate provision in Music in both new and old schools for sound proofed practice rooms; facilities for Drama also received unfavourable comment. Although some high schools are new and well provided for, there are others which, while they may compare favourably with the worst in other systems, are nevertheless not conducive to eliciting the best responses from students, in spite of being set in well established and well maintained grounds.

The Committee considers that these concerns are well founded and should receive attention. Here again it should be noted that such concerns are being expressed nationally and no doubt reflect the present tight economic situation. The fact remains, nevertheless, that continued deferment of maintenance and a failure to update and upgrade equipment results eventually in a serious run down of stock, a high cost burden in the future, loss in morale and decreased educational opportunities. The Committee considers that the ACT Schools Authority should work with the Department of Housing and Construction to develop a program for overcoming the present deficit in school building and plant maintenance. It also considers that the allocation of funds to the Schools Authority by the Federal Government should take into account the present incapacity of the system to provide sufficient funds to schools for the maintenance, replacement and upgrading of school buildings and equipment. Particular attention should be given to raising the limit of $250 per item for school spending on maintenance. The matter of funding is discussed in more detail earlier in this chapter.

One of the aspects of effecting change in high schools discussed elsewhere in this report is that of "de-institutionalizing" the schools through changes in structure and in the development of improved interpersonal relationships. Physical facilities can have an effect here also. The Committee believes that, in a number of the older established high schools, changes in atmosphere could be engendered at relatively little cost by initiatives such as the provision of carpeting in appropriate areas and adequate facilities for counselling and career guidance.

There is a substantial return in reduction of noise level and an encouragement of more relaxed and improved interpersonal relationships. As one submisson put it what is needed is "the provision of a stimulating, people-centred learning environment. Time for teachers to develop valuable interpersonal relationships with students and to motivate students on an individual basis, through maximising their specific interests, could enable schools to become more positive places for students during compulsory years."

On the basis of our examination of a complex picture of resource provision, we cannot but conclude that, when viewed as a totality, the ACT school system is well resourced when compared nationally. Nevertheless, we have drawn attention to what we see to be some inequalities in the distribution of resources between the various sectors. We have also identified some deficit areas where we believe additional resources are necessary in the high school sector, our principal focus of attention. We have indicated that an increasing proportion of total Schools Authority resources are being devoted to salaries. We believe that a major factor in this is the unreality of the bulk of the secondary school staffing formulae being independent of enrolments and recommend that this situation should be remedied during the current review of staffing formulae. We suspect that some savings (but small as a percentage of total expenditure) could be achieved if the school cleaning budget became the responsibility of the Schools Authority and if this were further delegated to school boards. Similar considerations would apply to utilities expenditure and telephones, provided schools were protected by suitable indexation procedures and necessary assistance were given in financial management.

The Committee considers that there is considerable potential for school boards to be more actively involved in financial management in schools. Although self-management funds are provided to school boards, it is claimed by the ACT Council of P and C Associations that "high school parents have little involvement in budgetary processes. Funds seem to be largely allocated by principals and senior staff. Far fewer attempts have been made in high schools than in primary schools to involve parents in the establishing of priorities. This involvement in budgeting at the primary schools is one important way in which parents become involved in consideration of real educational

issues and the setting of goals and priorities - and it seems quite absent from some high schools in the ACT." The Committee considers that, where this is the case, it is most unfortunate. Involvement of a wide range of parents provides a base from which school board membership can be drawn and could lead to greater continuity in membership.

The Committee is attracted to the notion of aggregated funding called a "basket of services" or "basket of resources" approach to funding schools, as outlined by the Schools Commission. Given the devolved-participatory structure, the ACT is well placed to take a major initiative in Australian education by devolving to school boards the responsibility to determine the mix of personnel and other resources and services which a school requires. Two opportunities currently exist at Watson and Telopea Park where the conventional staffing formulae have been waived for 1984 and beyond owing to the atypical nature of these schools. There would also be value in school boards, in line with Victorian school councils, having the authority to engage supplementary staff, particularly what are known in some systems as "hourly paid instructors", that is people without normal teaching qualifications who can, through their own special skills, add new dimensions to an educational program. Similarly, the Committee sees scope for schools to engage people to work on school/community liaison. We have referred earlier to the employment of some potential school leavers as part-time ancillary staff. This process could well be more flexible administratively if such persons were engaged by school boards. It would be particularly valuable if school boards were able to engage in joint ventures with other school boards to plan co-operatively and to share resources.

Changing Demography

The ACT Schools Authority and NCDC have been well aware for some years of the implications of demographic changes on the demand for, and utilization of, school facilties. A number of studies have been undertaken to attempt to determine the most likely future scenario and to develop procedures which enable a realistic assessment to be made of facilities supply and demand in specific local areas. Indeed, the ACT Schools Authority was one of the first systems to undertake work in this area.

Reports prepared include:

* Declining and Shifting Enrolments in ACT Secondary Schools, 1980;

* Management of Accommodation in ACT Government Schools, 1981;

* Schedules of Accommodation in ACT Government Schools, 1981;

* Guidelines for Management of Space in ACT Government School Buildings, 1981;

* Managing a Contracting School System, 1981.

These reports and activity resulting from them have drawn the attention of schools and the community to some of the implications of changing patterns of enrolments. Before we comment on outcomes and future needs, it is worthwhile to review briefly the nature and extent of likely enrolment changes.

Primary Schools

Enrolments in primary schools have been declining since 1980 and the general trend on present assumptions will be one of decline for the rest of this decade. From 1982 to 1987 the decline projected is 1 250 enrolments. Details are given in Table 20. The impact has already been felt in older established areas of North and South Canberra, Woden and South Belconnen, while increased enrolments are still occurring in newer areas such as Tuggeranong and West Belconnen. The trends are shown in Figures 3 and 4.

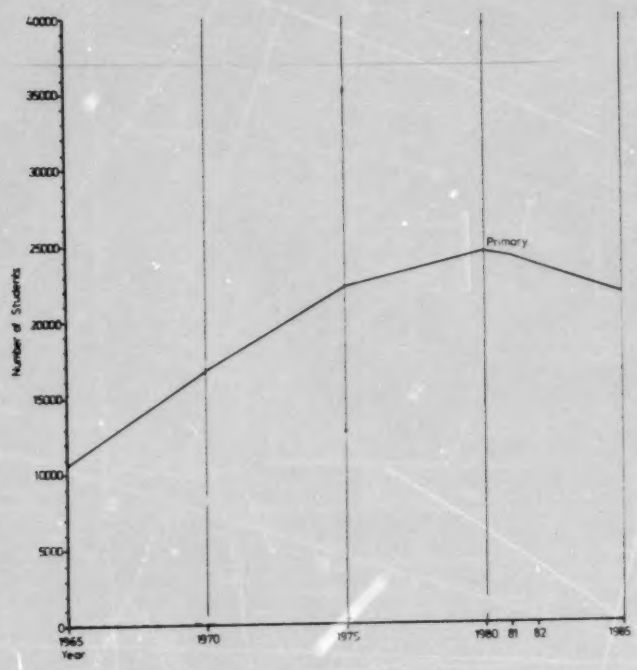
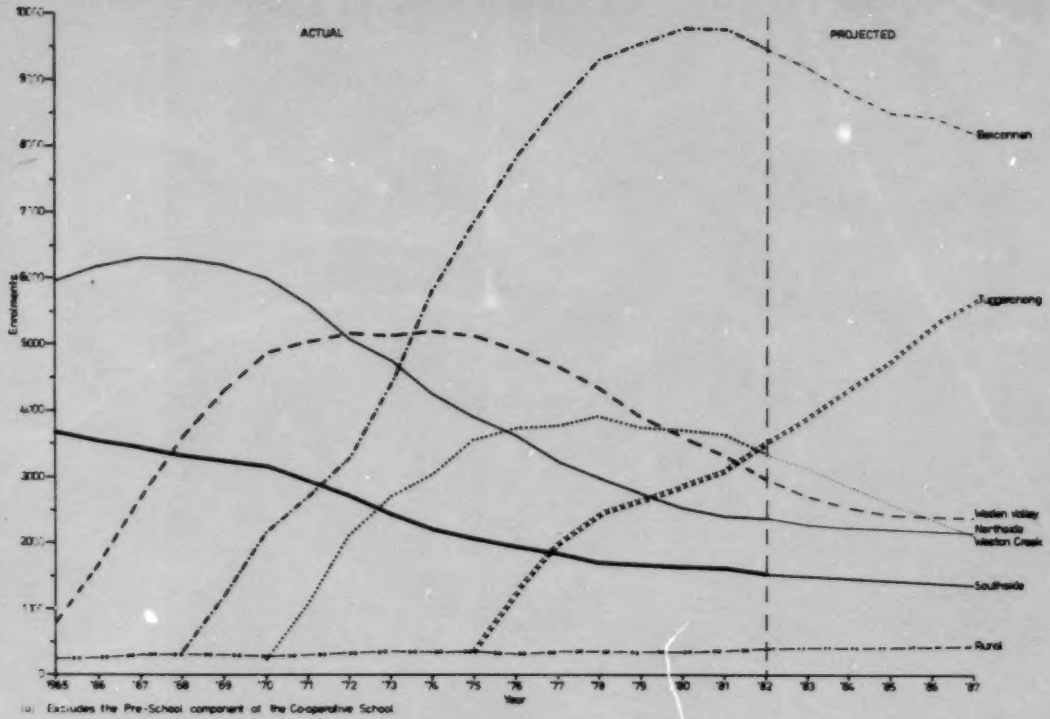


Figure 3
Enrolments in A.C.T. Government Primary Schools 1965–82 and Projected 1982–85

Source: ACT Schools Authority, *Selected School Statistics 1982*, 1983.



(a) Excludes the Pre-School component of the Cooperative School

Figure 4
Government Primary Schools : Enrolments by Region, 1965–1982 (Actual) and 1983–1987 (Projected)

Source ACT Schools Authority, *Selected School Statistics 1982*, 1983.

Table 20

SUMMARY OF PROJECTED PRIMARY SCHOOL ENROLMENTS
ACT GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

As at September 1982

Primary Schools

	Actual July 1982	Projected July 1983-87				
	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
Urban	23196	22723	22219	21874	22044	21819
Rural	379	403	400	405	410	415
Total (incl Special Students)	23575	23126	22619	22279	22454	22234
Special Schools	187	242	260	270	275	275
Hospital Schools	20	25	25	25	25	25
Total Primary	23782	23393	22904	22574	22754	22534

High Schools

The variations projected in high school enrolments are shown in Figure 5.

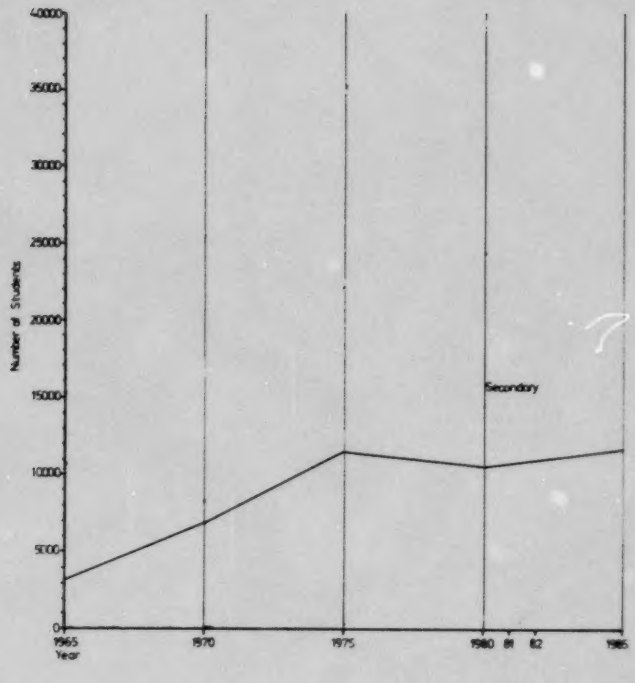
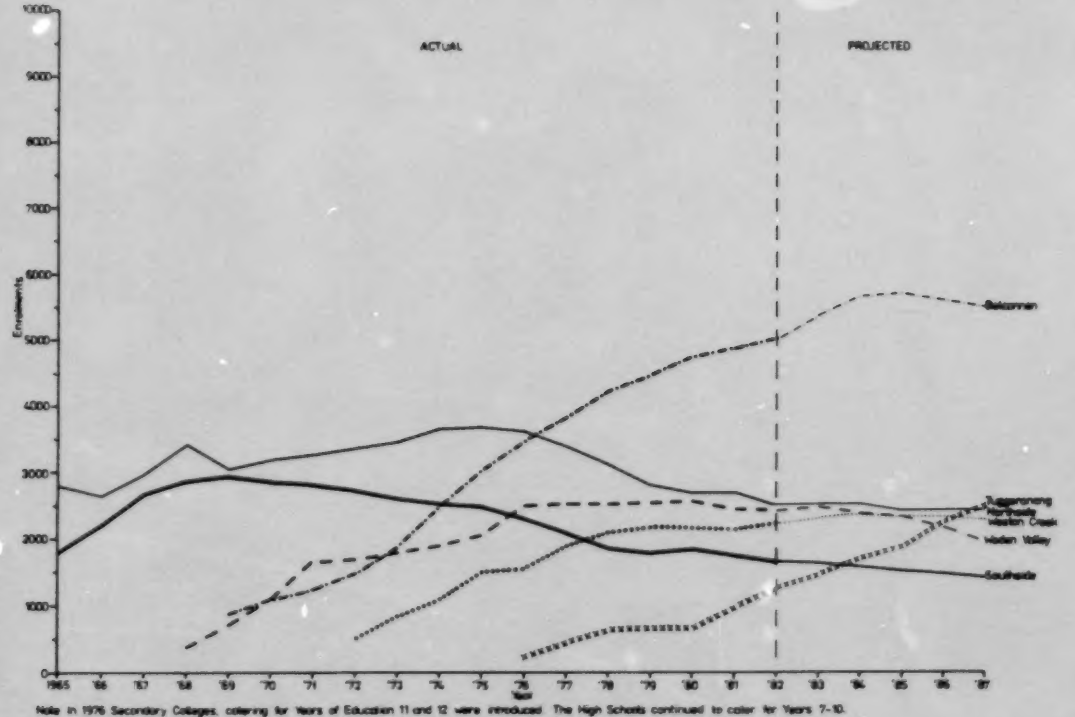


Figure 5
Enrolments in A.C.T. Government High Schools 1965–82 and Projected 1982–85

Source: ACT Schools Authority, *Selected School Statistics 1982*, 1983.

This overall relative stability in high school enrolments conceals the magnitude of the changes wich are expected to occur on a district basis. Continued decline will occur in Woden Valley and South Canberra while growth is expected initially in Belconnen, Weston Creek and Tuggeranong. After 1985, only Tuggeranong is expected to continue to experience growth. At a lower level of detail, there are differential effects expected at individual high schools within these districts. The overall changes are as shown in Figure 6 and details for individual schools are shown in Table 21.



Note: In 1976 Secondary Colleges, catering for Years of Education 11 and 12, were introduced. The High Schools continued to cater for Years 7-10.

Figure 6
Government High Schools and Secondary Colleges: Enrolments by Region, 1965–1982 (Actual) and 1983–1987 (Projected)

Source: ACT Schools Authority, *Selected School Statistics 1982*, 1983.

Total enrolments of full-time students in the ACT declined marginally from 39 194 in 1981 to 39 010 in 1982 but they will increase marginally for a year or so before declining again.

The number of school staff (FTE) increased from 3 113 in 1981 to 3 214 in 1982. The corresponding numbers (FTE) of non-school staff are 228 and 234. Thus, overall there was an increase of 107 in the total FTE of all staff employed by the ACT Schools Authority from 1981 to 1982. The year level changes from 1981 to 1982 are listed in Table 22.

TABLE 21 – ACT GOVERNMENT SECONDARY HIGH SCHOOLS ACTUAL FEBRUARY 1982 – PROJECTED 1983 – 87

	1982		1983		1984		1985		1986		1987	
	M[1]	Sp[2]	M	Sp	M	Sp	M	Sp	M	Sp	M	Sp
Northside												
Campbell	683		710		715		665		660		670	
Lyneham	544	26	560	32	585	32	610	32	685	32	730	32
SWOW	19		35		40		40		40		40	
Watson	490		430		390		330		300		240	
Total	**1 736**	**26**	**1 725**	**32**	**1 730**	**32**	**1 645**	**32**	**1 685**	**32**	**1 680**	**32**
Southside												
Deakin	490		595		575		515		455		430	
Telopea Park	493	80	480	79	495	96	495	96	485	96	465	96
Total	**1 083**	**80**	**1 075**	**79**	**1 070**	**96**	**1 010**	**96**	**940**	**96**	**895**	**96**
Woden Valley												
Melrose	1 045		1 120		1 110		1 090		960		820	
Woden Valley	742		720		680	1	640	2	575	2	500	2
Total	**1 787**		**1 840**		**1 790**	**1**	**1 730**	**2**	**1 525**	**2**	**1 320**	**2**
Weston Creek												
Holder	750		775		825		850		830		795	
Weston Creek	768	30	775	32	830	48	820	48	760	48	710	48
Total	**1 518**	**30**	**1 550**	**32**	**1 655**	**48**	**1 670**	**48**	**1 590**	**48**	**1 505**	**48**
Belconnen												
Belconnen	852		865		885		865		850		790	
Canberra	814		810		810		745		680		800	
Charnwood	339		560		770		820		840		840	
Ginninderra	741		785		810		870		880		845	
Kaleen	668		710		720		750		740		711	
Melba	472		475		485		485		520		530	
Total	**3 886**		**4 195**		**4 480**		**4 535**		**4 490**		**4 316**	
Tuggeranong[3]												
Kambah	552		535		580		625		640		660	
Wanniassa	388	3	620	16	780	24	830	32	660	32	725	32
Chisholm	–		–		–		–		430	16	515	16
Total	**940**	**3**	**1 155**	**16**	**1 360**	**24**	**1 455**	**32**	**1 730**	**48**	**1 900**	**48**
TOTAL HIGH SCHOOLS	**10 950**	**139**	**11 540**	**159**	**12 085**	**200**	**12 045**	**209**	**11 960**	**225**	**11 616**	**225**
Special Schools												
Koomari	57		60		65		65		60		55	
Woden School	76		80		85		80		75		70	
Ward 10A	–		4		4		–		–		–	
TOTAL SPECIAL	**133**		**144**		**154**		**145**		**135**		**125**	

1 Mainstream students
2 Special students
3 Assumes next High School on Chisholm site and catholic school building.

TABLE 22 – NUMBER OF FULL-TIME STUDENTS, ACT, BY YEAR LEVEL, 1981 AND 1982

Year	Pre Year 1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1981	3 238	3 611	3 341	3 458	3 615	3 547	3 193	2 788	2 591	2 647	2 486	2 087	1 828
1982	3 212	3 368	3 306	3 114	3 371	3 512	3 435	2 948	2 772	2 534	2 551	2 132	1 914

It will be noticed that the numbers in each year level below Year 6 in 1982 are less than in 1981. This will start to impact on high school numbers within a few years, being offset initially by larger cohorts at upper year levels moving through the high schools. Projections of the Schools Authority indicate a projected peak of 12 265 declining to 11 841 by 1987, the end of the five year projection period. Enrolments in high schools would be expected to continue to decline for some years before stabilizing. Thus, as a system, the ACT can expect high school enrolments to peak in 1984. The rate of decline over the five years to 1987 of 424 enrolments is not large and is well within a reasonable variation in the projections. If a decline of some 400 does eventuate, some 30 teachers would be released after peak enrolment were reached. We believe that such positions should be retained within the staff ceiling to enable at least some of the needs we have identified to be met. In the short term or if the decline is less or if indeed there is an increase as a result of increased retention at Year 10 level or because of other demographic factors, the staff ceiling would need to be increased since all of the additional positions we have recommended could not be found by a reallocation within the system. We have indicated, however, that some positions would become available once an enrolment component is introduced into the staffing formulae.

A submission from the NCDC provided detailed information on likely future population, its distribution and its effects on enrolments. The submission also details the nature of the joint planning processes undertaken by NCDC and the Schools Authority. The Committee is pleased to note that since 1977, schools have not been built to cater in solid accommodation for peak enrolments but with a capacity of 60-80% of the expected enrolment peak. Peak enrolments are accommodated in transportable buildings. This "core-plus" approach avoids the immediate problem of surplus space once the peak enrolment has been passed.

The Commission has reviewed its policies for the provision of schools and these now are:

Schools for New Areas

The policies include provisions:

* to design school catchments in such a way that they are not dependent on rigidly defined neighbourhoods, but a more diverse area, based on the territorial unit in preference to the neighbourhood principle;

* for smaller schools not based on peak enrolments but on expected longer term enrolments and to cater for high enrolments with the provision of transportables which can be removed when no longer required;

* for fewer schools resulting in somewhat longer journeys for children but which provide better facilities.

Schools in Existing Areas

The policies include:

* to provide fewer schools and modernize them by providing up-to-date facilities similar to those in newer areas. To examine alternative uses for schools which are no longer required.

The Committee considers the policies for the provision of schools in new areas insofar as they apply to high schools, to be appropriate. Responses to changed needs in existing areas are more difficult. Such problems are being addressed by many Australian systems and they have been a characteristic of school planning in many Western countries in recent years. If there are two lessons that have been learnt they are that there is no unique solution, and that there are no easy solutions.

Leaving aside personnel implications, factors which must be considered include:

* the advantages of retention of a neighbourhood comprehensive high school;

* the curriculum implications of so doing as enrolments decline;

* the advantages gained in interpersonal relationships as schools become smaller;

* the increasing per capita cost;

* failure to release resources for alternative uses;

* reduced potential to upgrade existing facilities and equipment;

* increasing inefficiency in the use of high cost capital invested in buildings and equipment.

The Committee has not considered in depth the effects of demographic changes on individual high schools. These are well documented by the Authority and the NCDC.

The Committee does, however, consider that in the longer term it is unrealistic to expect that all ACT high schools will be able to be maintained as fully operational comprehensive high schools as they are currently known. It believes that to fail to recognize this would not be in the best interests of students, parents, teachers or the community. Responses must be made and must be made within the participative-devolved structure of the ACT system. It is naive to imagine that such complex issues can be left to a school board and its community in isolation. Each school, while developing and treasuring its individual characteristics, is part of a planned network and part of a system for which, in the final analysis, the Authority is responsible.

As difficult as it will be for some to accept, there will be occasions when the greater good of the community as a whole will outweigh those of a particular segment of the community.

Having said that, the Committee considers that every endeavour should be made to maintain neighbourhood high schools. It believes that this can be achieved by planned curriculum contraction by a group of schools which would enable students to enrol in the group with transport being arranged between the schools. In effect, such a group of smaller schools would co-operatively serve a larger neighbourhood or territory, and some element of specialization in one area of the curriculum would emerge in each of the schools. It would be possible to upgrade facilities in such specialist areas in one school when it would not be feasible nor justifiable to do this in each school. Other models will no doubt emerge as the Authority and school communities address the implications of enrolment downturn. The extent of decline in some schools or problems of access may, however, be such that co-operative arrangements are not viable and school closure is in the best interests of students.

Where alternative uses for schools are being considered, these should be consonant with educational issues as well as the aspirations and expectations of the public.

Planning for future demographic changes is never easy. Nevertheless, in spite of the unexpected variations in demand, which may occur, there is ample evidence to show that most schools experience a growth phase, a peak enrolment and then decline, sometimes to a stable enrolment at an acceptable level but in other instances to a level at which questions of viability are raised.

Increasing attention is being given, particularly under the auspices of the OECD Programme on Educational Buildings, to gaining a better understanding of ways in which pro-active planning can incorporate future rationalization. Ideas include the provision of some accommodation in a relocatable form, but designed into the overall concept plan rather than appearing to

be an afterthought and an indication of inadequate planning. This 'core-plus' approach is now, but perhaps somewhat belatedly, used in the ACT. Another approach finding favour and incorporated in planning for some schools in Australia, is co-operative planning with the providers of non-government school facilities. This can not only avoid over supply and cater for variations in demand but can result in joint ventures which result in lower costs in providing shared facilities as well as more effective use of the facilities.

The Committee found the discussion paper on planning for the future in Tuggeranong South of particular interest. The paper incorporates two ideas, the first being an alternative age grouping of students in a Phase 1 Early Childhood School catering for Years K-3, a Phase 2 providing for Years 4-9 (a middle school approach) and Phase 3 incorporating Years 10-12 (an extended secondary college). The second idea is to design the Phase 1 and Phase 2 facilities in ways which would facilitate the conversion of future surplus "domestic scale" units into acceptable alternative units. We are somewhat disappointed at the response this paper received. Although we have endorsed a continuation of the present 7-4-2 structure, we do not believe that it is the only acceptable alternative and a variation such as that proposed for Tuggeranong South has considerable potential. It is perhaps unfortunate that the second idea, that of "pro-active"(rather than reactive) rationalization became associated with an alternative structure. We believe that it is now a hallmark of good educational planning to recognize that, either as an alternative to or in addition to, a core-plus approach, enrolment fluctuations will result in surplus space being generated and the original design should accommodate this, at least to some extent.

This approach, illustrated in current planning for Aberfoyle Park High School in South Australia, is to provide discrete units, built to a domestic scale, which can be used as teaching areas but later released to be incorporated in the adjacent residential area. There are both initial and long term capital savings in this approach.

We consider as indicated in Chapter 11, that the Schools Authority should consider discussing these and other potentially effective long term rationalization planning principles with the NCDC and with local communities.

In broad terms and subject to no major changes in government policy on growth in Canberra and a continuance of current immigration policies and in line with current assumptions on future fertility rates, one can expect

* a need to provide new primary schools and new high schools in growth areas;

* a continued decline in primary school enrolments overall for the foreseeable future with the effect being most pronounced in older established areas;

* slight growth in total secondary enrolments as newer schools develop, assisted by some increase in the already high retention rates to Years 11 and 12;

* an eventual decline in the number of Year 7-10 students as the smaller primary school cohorts move through the system, with the effect again being unevenly distributed.

The net effects will be a progressive increase in the amount of surplus space in operating schools, even allowing for some of this to be absorbed as a result of expanded curricula and reductions in class size, should these eventuate either through the provision of additional resources or a redistribution of current resources.

Within the period of any impact this Review is likely to have, we believe that it is unlikely that significant additional capital resources will be provided. If this assumption is incorrect, there will be little difficulty in assigning additional resources in areas where the highest justification exists. It is a much harder task to re-assess priorities and re-distribute resources. It is also very hard for many to recognize that doing nothing, while changes in enrolment distribution are occurring or changed needs appear, does not maintain the status quo. Instead, such an approach results in resources becoming increasingly used up in progressively less viable educational units and less cost effective operations.

Hard decisions have to be made; decisions which are in the longer term in the best interests of the community as a whole even though, at least in the short term, there may be added inconvenience and substantial loss to those in a particular neighbourhood. The processes by which such decisions are made are important. Decisions which result in the loss of a neighbourhood amenity will never be readily accepted by all. It is important, nevertheless, for all to understand the processes involved and to know where the ultimate decision making authority and responsibility rests.

Summary

In this chapter we have examined resource provision and utilization in ACT schools in isolation and in comparison with other Australian systems. We have also looked at the comparative resourcing of the three sectors of ACT schools - primary, high and colleges.

A general conclusion is that the ACT per capita cost is higher than those in the States but that there are factors peculiar to the system which largely account for the difference. Relatively ACT schools do not seem to be disadvantaged in provision of recurrent resources, but non-salary expenditure has shown a relative continuous decrease.

Teaching Staff

The pupil-teacher ratio in ACT is better than in three state systems but valid comparisons are difficult because of structural differences. Pupil-teacher ratio is not a good index of class size because of different patterns of release from face to face teaching and numbers of small special groups. An investigation in a sample of schools shows little variation between or within schools in core subjects, but considerable differences between core and elective subjects and between electives, both within and between schools. In relation to teaching staff, we recommend that:

* the forthcoming staffing review should consider the assumptions regarding average class sizes in the various sectors and time release for Band 2 teachers, and should consider a formula which has an enrolment component for Band 2 and 3 allocation in secondary schools;
* in determining personnel use policies schools should give special consideration to the needs of Year 7;
* if additional resources become available (eg. from maintenance of staff ceilings in a period of declining enrolment) priority should be given to reducing the size of core classes, but unless substantial reductions are possible it would be better to give additional support services, particularly resource teachers.

The investigation into class arrangements indicated that students at times have a limited choice and are sometimes locked into a sequential program at an alarmingly early stage. The Committee considers that the early years of high school, while providing a good grounding in "basics", should also be exploratory in nature.

The traditional reasons for lower pupil-teacher ratio in senior secondary years do not seem appropriate in ACT colleges. More equality of provision between high schools and colleges would encourage movement of staff between the secondary sectors. If it is necessary to relocate teachers in order to lower primary class sizes, it should be at the expense of the colleges, not of the high schools. Some extra resource in high schools could be found by a re-arrangement of function.

We support the beginning teacher allowance, but regret that it is not always made available.

We recommend that financial provision should be made to ensure that the beginning teacher allowance continues and that all beginning teachers are able to take advantage of it.

Relief

We endorse the provision of staff relief for curriculum development and evaluation.

We consider that if our suggestions for co-operative curriculum development and evaluation between schools are accepted additional relief will be necessary.

We recommend that, rather than being disbursed on a formula basis, the study leave allocation be retained in the Defined Needs Pool for distribution as and when required to meet specific needs.

In order to provide better support for schools additional resources will be needed in the Curriculum Branch. One source would be through a review of the school staffing formula and possible redeployment.

As a suggestion to provide more time for curriculum planning we recommend that school boards be given power to grant pupil-free days within guidelines set by the Authority, rather than the present cumbersome method.

In order to establish rapport with schools and develop strategies for change there will need to be a project group. The Project Youth proposal is relevant here. Alternatively, if funding is not available for this project, this leadership role could be undertaken by master teachers and/or teachers and senior staff in declining schools.

Declining and shifting enrolments will free some positions. We recommend that these positions should be retained in the ceiling to meet some of the needs we have identified. If, for some reason, these positions do not become available the ceiling would need to be increased.

Ancillary Staff

There is, in practice, a lack of flexibility in ancillary staff use. We recommend that schools review their ancillary staff needs each time a vacancy occurs.

We also recommend that the current Ancillary Staff Review should investigate the comparative levels of ancillary staff provision between the sectors, particularly between colleges and primary schools.

A further recommendation is that part of the ancillary funding be used to provide work experience and opportunities for part-time work and school study.

We suggest that funds should be available to allow boards to employ temporary library staff at times of special need, rather than having a roving library task force.

Self-Management Funds

We recommend that the Authority review the formula with special reference to per capita grants for library and text books, and the level of funding for repairs and maintenance. Funding should be sought at such a level that parent contributions would be used for curriculum enrichment and there should be provision for indexation of funding.

We noted a feeling of disquiet at the provision made for consultation generally on policy statements, and in particular on the statement on "Voluntary Contributions". We believe that the Authority should ensure that adequate provision, particularly of time, is made for consultation.

Buildings

There is a lack of flexibility in high school buildings including open space. We suggest that a building design review should be undertaken before another secondary school building is planned.

We suggest that the Authority and school communities examine alternative approaches for the planning of new facilities which recognize fluctuating demand for school buildings.

There is a serious lack of maintenance and upgrading of buildings and equipment.

We recommend:

* that wherever possible greater opportunity should be given for community and user input into building design and upgrading;
* that schools should have more direct control over the activities of cleaners, particularly if responsibility for electrical, heating and telephone accounts is devolved to schools;
* the hiring of school facilities should be in the hands of schools, with charges set at a level to cover janitor's overtime, lighting, heat and a proportion of maintenance.

We recommend that the Authority should work with the Department of Housing and Construction to develop a program for overcoming the backlog of building maintenance. The Federal Government should allocate funds for maintenance, replacement and upgrading of equipment.

We believe that the limit of $250 per item for school spending on maintenance should be raised.

We detect a need for changes in atmosphere in older schools. We recommend that steps be taken for noise reduction and the provision of carpet and more suitable furniture.

The problem of declining enrolments must be met by area planning, rather than on a school by school basis. This implies hard decisions which are in the longer term in the best interests of the community as a whole even though, at least in the short term, there may be inconvenience and loss to a particular neighbourhood. There is a need to develop co-use strategies, for buildings to be designed to allow for alternative functions, and perhaps for an alternative structure in some areas to the one presently used.

This Review has attempted to examine the principles underlying the provision of high school education in the ACT and to assess how successfully practice matches these principles.

We accept that no school system will ever provide education which does not fail some children at least for some of their life at school. The important thing is to ensure that when this happens the fact is known and that steps are taken to remedy the causes, to assist the child who has suffered and to ensure that steps are taken to minimize the likelihood of a recurrence.

The Review has found much to commend in the work of the high schools in the ACT. It has seen dedicated and skilled teachers, strong leadership and effective parental support in many schools. Nevertheless, it has also seen evidence of poor teaching, weak leadership and ineffective parental support. We have not made specific comments on schools as our task is to review high school education not to comment upon practice in particular schools.

Therefore, our judgement is that too many schools are finding difficulty in keeping pace with the changing needs of students in high schools in the ACT. We should again stress that we are of the view that this is probably true of many high schools in the Australian States as well.

As we have indicated, much has been written on the subject of making schools more adaptable and in particular, several valuable reports have commented upon strategies which might well be attempted to achieve this. The Committee does not believe that there is any one solution to this problem but believes that there are some suggestions which high schools in the ACT and the Schools Authority should consider.

While the Committee accepts that schools should be responsible for their programs, we do not believe that schools should be free to disregard the need for change, nor should they be left entirely to their own devices. There is inevitably a responsibility, and indeed an obligation, which must rest with the Schools Authority to ensure that schools understand the changing needs of society; that schools develop plans to meet these changes according to negotiated plans and priorities in the general directions determined by the Authority; and that adequate resources are provided.

This does not mean that the Authority should issue directives which ignore the capacity of schools to change nor the need for schools to reflect their perceptions of local needs and wishes. Far from it. Local participation is at the heart of all education and is one of the great strengths of schools in the ACT. There is a need, however, to sensibly negotiate changes within broad overall parameters without causing unnecessary upheavals to students or teachers.

In this regard the Committee of Review notes with pleasure the efforts made by some schools to provide for young people courses which relate to life. On the other hand it must report that in its view some schools have turned their backs upon the difficulties associated with ensuring that the courses offered to students are likely to equip them for life, while others make claims which are not carried through into practice.

It also notes that there are significant groups of parents and citizens who endorse both of the former positions and others who appear to accept the latter with little expression of concern.

The Campbell Report suggested a high school curriculum structure which has some elements in common with the adaptive school:

> "We see the structuring of the curriculum of the high school against a background of the need to broaden the range of studies and introduce a flexibility and a diversity of curricula, linked to the life and work of the general community. The curriculum at this level must provide for all students stimulus to develop in three broad, overlapping educational dimensions: the development and refinement of cognitive skills, the maturing of socialisation, and the acquisition of competence in creative, productive and recreational pursuits." (Campbell 1973)

This approach is also advocated in the Schools Commission's 'Adaptive School' model which suggests how schools might look in the future. The Adaptive School can be seen as an investment against the potential for alienation in epidemic proportions.

These characteristics include:

a range of course options which gives the emphasis to both practical and theoretical knowledge and to practical and academic skills;

warm and friendly relations between students and staff, based on mutual respect;

programs consistent with the notion that all post-school options for students require them to be able to function autonomously and effectively;

close connections with the community being served and through it with the wider society.

We reiterate that there are already schools whose practices are geared very closely to the needs of students along these lines, rather than expecting students simply to conform to an unrealistic hierarchy of expectations. We are advocating that all high schools should discuss and negotiate practices based upon these characteristics under the aegis of the Schools Authority.

We are aware that some schools are proceeding gradually, but purposefully, in this direction. In making our judgements, against schools which have resisted change and are experiencing real difficulty, we need to recognize that there is an enormous tension between the school as an accountable institution and the school as a social organism. Schools tend to be conservative because they are responsible 'in loco parentis' and they have been expected, traditionally, to provide orderly environments where discipline and academic prowess are prominent. There are also laws, regulations and conventions which foster conservatism. The Committee understands this and accepts it as important that schools should conserve all that is best in our culture.

At the same time many people have expressed the view that high schools in particular need to respond to the changing needs of pupils which we have endeavoured to outline in the early chapters of this report.

The tension which these opposing views can produce, confuses, drains energies, creates lowered morale, promotes diffidence and can detract from the important business of teaching and learning.

The Committee wishes to stress its view that, in advocating an adaptive approach to schooling, it is not suggesting that students should not be expected to conform to negotiated and agreed expectations. It is, however, asking that only expectations which meet the criterion of valuing every student and which foster relationships within which learning can best take place, should be adopted by schools.

A similar view is put forward by Newmann in his guidelines for reducing student alienation. He states:

> "The call for greater clarity and consistency in school goals is not an endorsement of dogmatic, socially homogeneous schools that violate individuality. Rather, the challenge is to build clear, internally consistent goals which are compatible with the values of the school's clientele but which also respond to individual diversity."

Nor should we be seen to be advocating a lowering of expectations of performance. It needs to be remembered that there is nothing inherently more rigorous in studying Latin than Art. There may be an expectation that one is more difficult than the other, and that one requires more effort than the other, but in fact any differences are entirely in the hands of the teacher, the demands that are made upon the students, and the responses that are evoked.

There is no place for "soft options" in any school curriculum.

The Adaptive School model can apply equally to the junior secondary as to the senior secondary school, and if we are to attempt to give pupils a stake in their schooling, and encourage them to continue beyond the compulsory years then it is the Years 7-10 period which is critical.

The introduction of colleges has obviously been a very successful innovation. Anderson's study (1980) indicates that students who attend them reveal a high level of motivation, satisfaction with the atmosphere of their environment, and commitment to the colleges both in the learning and the social sense. Certainly, they demonstrate that a new structural and attitudinal design can make enormous differences to the people who comprise an institution.

It seems to us, however, that a price has been paid for truncating the high schools in this way.

The high schools tend to be free of pressure of change, and yet it is here that disenchantment tends to set in for too many students.

But we remind our readers again, high schools are social institutions, where the conflicts, joys, triumphs and tragedies of the wider society will inevitably surface. If we accept alienation as an experience which is not uncommon, then we can assume that every student will, from time to time, feel remote from their school, or some aspect of school life. Schools can be frightening places for the shy and for the newcomer who has not yet found a niche in the peer group. This has nothing to do with the ability to learn. We also know that the very gifted child will sometimes feel very alienated because prowess sets the bright apart and may disconcert fellow students and sometimes, sadly, even teachers, until he or she can either come to terms with this high ability, or find some way of being accepted by the group.

Certainly schools need to be alert for such students and to ensure that they are given wise, sympathetic counselling and support. Problems of this nature ignored, or not satisfactorily resolved, can lead to lasting unhappiness and failure. Certainly the current debate on secondary education has indicated that conventional schooling has particular features which foster disenchantment and disengagement among students, which hamper and frustrate teachers, and which contribute to a general feeling of malaise across education systems.

A recent literature survey (Brunner 1982), which examines schooling for 15-19 year olds, reveals that the concerns of the Schools Commission Report on the 15/16 age group have been echoed in various forums, in submissions to major enquiries, in studies conducted within individual States, and among major researchers abroad in relation to the 15-19 age group.

Examining the students' point of view, there is considerable consistency in contemporary research and our findings.

Among the oft-repeated criticisms meted out by students are suggestions that the curriculum bears little direct relationship to the external world, that there are few opportunities for them to develop practical skills, and that the school environment tends to be pointed away from the development of initiative and autonomy.

Collins' and Hughes' study (1978) reveals a remarkable correlation between students, parents and teachers in their views of how secondary school could be improved.

The solutions however, do not appear to be being sought with a great deal of zeal. In their report Curriculum Action Project, Cohen and Harrison (1978) address the questions:

1. What decisions are made in Australian schools concerning curricula for Years 7 to 10?

2. How are these decisions being made?

3. What factors influence decision making?

Their findings suggest that there is very little innovation in curriculum development for Years 7-10; most curriculum development is aimed towards intellectual achievement; and students and parents take very little part in curriculum decisions.

Perhaps it is not surprising therefore, to find Torsten Husen (1979) in his international summary of attitudes to compulsory schooling finding:

> "Ample evidence to show that ... the ... attitude towards school becomes increasingly negative as the student progresses through the grades constituting compulsory schooling. Even among those who opt to proceed through the upper secondary school the general attitude tends towards the negative side."

The Committee therefore notes and applauds the fact that the Schools Authority is planning to establish in co-operation with South Australia, a working party to explore high school curricula and related issues. To be called 'Project Youth', it is designed to encourage, develop and enhance school practices which will relfect the needs of high school students.

Finally, we have indicated our firm belief that there is a need for the schools and the community under the auspices of the Schools Authority to reconsider the machinery which has evolved to provide education in the ACT.

At the very heart of this machinery is the consultative process between the schools, the parents, the community and the Schools Authority.

We have concluded that there are significant gaps between the wishes, expectations and even understandings about what schools are endeavouring to do, of students, parents and teachers. We have suggested that the Authority should take the initiative in endeavouring to close these gaps. In doing so, opportunities should be presented for curriculum to be made more flexible, rigorous and fulfilling for young people in schools.

Such a development places obligations on all parties, firstly to approach these negotiations with open minds and a willingness to compromise. In students it means that when a school has reached a consensus about its aims, objectives and curricula that they will co-operate in the process of pursuing these aims and objectives with zeal and determination. For parents, it means a willingness to spend time and energy in ensuring that their views are made known and that they endeavour to understand the directions which others are advocating. In teachers, it means a willingness to accept that schools exist solely for the pupils who attend them and that pupils' needs must be paramount and given greater importance than subject affiliations or accepted practices. Teachers too must learn not only to listen, but to hear what the community is saying to them directly and through the Schools Authority.

Finally, to the Schools Authority falls the daunting task in ensuring that provisions are made for these consultations to take place at the school and local level, to interpret the results of these negotiations and to develop broad policies which reflect them. Its task is to promote the leadership and to manage available resources in such a way as to ensure that these policies are fulfilled.

The Committee is confident that given the enterprise, energy and imagination already displayed by the large majority of teachers in the ACT, the support and willingness of parents to co-operate in school activities and the necessary guidance and resources from the Schools Authority, the high schools in the ACT will develop programs which retain the best of the past and meet the needs of students in the nineteen eighties.

It is also confident that in so doing high schools in the ACT can maintain and improve the level of scholarship which is so important for all.

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ORGANIZATIONS

ACT Advisory Committee on Linked Courses
ACT Association for Multicultural Education
ACT Council of P & C Associations
ACT Teachers Federation
ACT Trades and Labour Council
Australian Association for Dance Education (ACT Branch)
Australian Association of Special Education (ACT Chapter)
Australian College of Education (ACT Chapter)
Belconnen High School Board
Belconnen High School, various subject departments
Canberra Art Teachers Association
Canberra Mathematical Association
Capital Territory Health Commission, Health Education Section
Career Education Association of the ACT
Charnwood High School Board
Consumer Affairs Bureau
Deakin High School Board
Duffy Primary School Board
Electricity Commission of NSW
Elimination of Sexism Working Party
Evatt Primary School Board
Farrer Primary School Board
Ginninderra High School Board
Giralang Primary School Board
Holder Primary School Board
Macgregor Primary School Board
Melba Primary School Board

Organizations cont'd

Melrose High School P & C Association
Melrose High School Staff
Narrabundah College
National Capital Development Commission
North Curtin Primary School Board
Office of ACT Further Education
Progression Advisory Committee
St Clare's College
School Community and Student Welfare Standing Committee
School Counsellors
School Library Association of Canberra and District
Secondary Assistant Principals' Curriculum Committee
Secondary Music Teachers
Secondary Principals' Council
Telopea Park High School P & C Association
Turner Primary School Board
Waramanga Primary School Board
Weston Primary School Board
Woden College of Technical and Further Education
Woden School Board
Woden Valley High School Board
World Plan Executive Council of Australia
Yarralumla Primary School Board

INDIVIDUALS

Mr B Abrahams
Mrs D Adams
Ms S K Birkin
Mr V Black
Mr F Brown
Mr I Clyde
Mr J R Coates
Mr A Davies
Mr P Enge
Mr A Forster
Mr R Green
Mr R Groves
Mr R Gunn
Ms J Hunt
Dr D Kendall
Rev J Littleton
Mr F McKone
Mr D K Moore
Mr J Morrow
Ms R Nazza and Mr B Weatherstone
Mr S Osborne
Ms N Ridgway
Mr D Stradwick
Ms C Tweedie
Mr C A Young

Appendix C: Research and the High School Review *

The method proposed for the operation of the High School Review recognized the need for a sound information base on which the Review Committee could determine the most appropriate directions for high school education in the ACT. The ACT Schools Authority believed that the traditional forms of information gathering such as school visitation by the Committee and formal written submissions made to the Committee by interested parties should be complemented by a wide ranging research program. The more traditional forms of data gathering do not provide the opportunity for detailed examination of issues of relevance to review committees. As a consequence they do not enable review committees to develop detailed arguments for desired changes. By contrast a research program provides the opportunity to focus in detail upon specific major issues and generate a degree of understanding about those issues not otherwise possible. Furthermore a research program, properly designed and executed, provides a powerful legitimation function. The validity of recommendations flowing from reviews is scrutinized in terms of the evidence on which such recommendations are based. Research evidence, when combined with evidence collected by formal and less formal submissions from interested parties as well as knowledge gained by a review committee when visiting schools or in discussion with relevant people, provides a sound base on which proposed changes can be argued.

A research program undertaken in conjunction with a review may also be of benefit to the system as a whole and to schools in particular. A review of education provides a climate, even engenders an attitude, for officers within a system to analyse areas of the operation of the system which are of relevance to them. Research documents dealing in detail with specific aspects of the system increase understanding and might well act as a catalyst for change at the officer level. The same might be true at the level of individual schools. A research program undertaken in individual schools provides greater understanding of the operation of those schools. Such information is not only of relevance to a review committee. It is also directly relevant to the school from which it was received and may be used by that school as a basis for self-evaluation.

Clearly there are three audiences to whom the research program described in this report and its associated volumes are directed. First and foremost there is the review committee concerned with the review of high school education in the ACT. Secondly there are the members of the ACT Schools Authority and staff of the Schools Office. Thirdly, and in many ways the most important, are the teachers within ACT government high schools. Without their understanding of the issues, changes proposed by a review committee are less likely to be implemented.

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* This research appendix was prepared by Evaluation and Research Section of the Office of the ACT Schools Authority (Adrian Fordham and Janet Hunt, co-authors).

The Scope of the Research Program

The scope of the research program was governed by several factors. Firstly it was governed by the breadth of the terms of reference of the High School Review. The terms of reference focused upon five aspects of high school education. These concerned:

* the goals of education and their relevance to the future;

* the structure of high school education and its relation to other educational sectors and employment;

* the provision of resources for high school education, including both staffing and physical resources;

* the structure, content and process of high school curriculum and its relevance to the needs of high school students;

* The outcomes of high school education and their evaluation.

It would not be possible to develop a research program which could investigate the many facets of each of these five aspects of secondary education. Resources would not permit it. We approached the problem of delineating the breadth of the research program in two ways. Firstly we designed a series of preliminary studies prior to the commencement of the review. The purpose of these studies was to identify issues which should be addressed either by the main research program or the Review Committee or both. Secondly we sought guidance from the Review Committee as to their priorities for research during the review.

At the same time there was a set of research considerations which guided the overall design of the research program. The first of these concerned the nature of the issues we were investigating in our research program, and the degree of specificity with which those issues would be analysed. This concern represents a concern about the level of analysis which characterizes any research endeavour. From the outset we maintained that information we gathered should be analysed at both the system-level and where possible at the school-level. System-level analyses are useful to the extent that they describe the system as a whole in terms of a particular characteristic. However they do not indicate the extent to which variation of that characteristic occurs across the system. By contrast a school-level analysis describes the school in terms of the characteristic being studied. In this way one is able to focus upon similarities and differences between schools within the system. Combining both a system-level and school-level approach to analysis, the research program was able to study the system as a whole and identify school differences operating within the system. A second research consideration was that the research program should consist of a series of studies investigating particular aspects of high school education and drawing information from a variety of sources within the school community. However these research studies would not be

independent of each other. Rather several studies could well provide evidence about a particular issue, perhaps even acting as a means of cross-validation of findings. This consideration was in recognition of a potential deficiency in any policy-related research program, viz, the reliance upon single indicators on which to develop appropriate recommendations.

There was also a concern that the need to establish system-wide findings, perhaps by large scale surveys, should not preclude resources being also devoted to in-depth analyses at the school-level. That is, it was felt important to develop a methodology for the research program which exhibited a balance of both quantitative and qualitative approaches to data-gathering. This would allow detailed analysis of issues arising from more system-wide studies.

A fourth consideration was that the research studies would, where possible, provide information that was comparative with other studies carried out either previously within the ACT or elsewhere. Two such studies were Martin and Meade's analysis of the experiences of Sydney high school students (Meade 1981) and Anderson and his colleagues' comparative analysis of ACT secondary schools in 1972 and 1979 (Anderson, Saltet and Vervoorn 1980).

Finally we were concerned about the audience to whom the research program was directed. As has been already said, the principal audience was the High School Review Committee. However it was felt by the researchers that the schools also were an important audience, for issues were being researched within schools and it was within schools that educational change would occur. Commissioned research does not lend itself easily to the promotion of change at the school-level - schools fail to have a sense of ownership of the research and a commitment to its findings. Yet there were insufficient resources available to actively involve schools in the design and implementation of a research program appropriate to meet the needs of the Review Committee.

In summary the scope of the research program was defined by the terms of reference of the High School Review. However these were quite extensive and a series of preliminary studies was undertaken to establish the major issues requiring further attention in a more extensive research program. These issues were complemented by issues specifically raised by the Review Committee. The design of the research program was further influenced by five research considerations: the levels of analysis, the interdependence of particular research studies, the appropriateness of quantitative and qualitative methodologies, the usefulness of comparative information and the role of research in the promotion of educational change.

The Research Program

The research program was undertaken in two distinct stages. In the first stage a series of preliminary or "pilot" studies were undertaken prior to the formal commencement of the High School Review. The second stage comprised a set of major research studies concerning issues emerging from the preliminary studies. In addition several critical papers were commissioned which dealt with issues of importance not included within the formal research program.

Stage 1: The Pilot Studies

There were two major aims of the series of pilot studies undertaken by the Evaluation and Research Section during the first half of 1982. The first aim was to identify issues of importance to high school education which the High School Review needed to address in greater detail when it commenced its work. The second purpose was to develop appropriate methods for gathering and analysing information about these issues. This latter purpose was important because the information gathering and analysis phase of the main research program was limited to about 12 weeks towards the end of 1982.

The pilot studies investigated a wide ranging set of issues and areas of concern. The identification of appropriate issues for research was based upon their relevance to the guidelines of the High School Review, their importance having been emphasized by previous research in the ACT or elsewhere or their having been suggested by educators within the ACT educational system. In addition, opportunity was provided for the staff and students involved in the pilot studies to identify issues for further research. With these considerations in mind the pilot studies investigated teacher and student views on the goals of secondary schooling, the structure of high schools, the curriculum, teaching practices, assessment procedures, resource levels and the outcomes of secondary education.

The pilot studies were undertaken in two high schools which were quite different in both length of establishment and architectural design. One high school had been established in the 1960's and was of a more traditional design. The second school was one of the more recently established high schools in Canberra, being built in 1979 and characterized by an open-area design. The two high schools differed in several other respects. The curriculum structure of the older high school was somewhat more traditional in its organization placing greater emphasis upon grouping students into ability levels. That of the younger school placed emphasis on pastoral care and student social development and had a cyclic timetable with periods of varying lengths.

Within each of these schools student- and teacher-focused studies were undertaken in order to determine students' and teachers' own views of what constituted important issues for contemporary high school education.

The Student-Focused Pilot Studies

There were six major areas focusing upon students which were investigated in the pilot studies. These were:

* student transition from primary to high school;
* students' perceptions of the subjects they were studying;
* students' perceptions of their classroom learning environments;
* educational and personal concerns of high school students;
* students' views on the organization, processes and outcomes of high school education;
* factors influencing the amount and type of homework done by high school students.

These areas of concern were not unique to the current ACT high school system. Rather they had been the focus of research in other countries and in other parts of Australia; several had even been addressed in the ACT as recently as 1979. Taking this into account a series of pilot research studies dealing with these six areas were organized which, where possible, utilized data-gathering methods and instruments which had been used in other studies, particularly other Australian and ACT studies. This provided the opportunity in several areas for comparisons across time and between systems. For example, the study of student transition from primary to secondary school was derived from Power and Cotterell's (1981) study of transition in Queensland schools. Studies of students' views on the goals, processes and outcomes of high school education utilized aspects of Meade's (1981) analysis of the experiences of Sydney high school students, Anderson et al.'s(1980) study of ACT secondary schools and Power's research of alternative high school patterns of organization in South Australia (Power, undated). In addition the developmental work of Williams et al.(1981) dealing with the quality of school life provided another avenue for investigating students' views about their high school education. The study of factors influencing the amount and type of homework done by high school students was a comparative study to that undertaken by Coulter (1980) in Western Australian secondary schools.

The pilot studies undertaken in each of the two high schools were quite extensive. All students from both schools were involved, on average, in two of the pilot studies over the eight week period of data-gathering from March to May, 1982. Year 7 students from both schools participated in survey studies of their experiences as they entered secondary school and their perceptions, after approximately 10 weeks, of the quality of secondary school life. In total 272 students were involved in each study, about 60 of whom were also interviewed about their experiences. The Year 10 students from both schools were involved in interviews and survey work dealing with the broad range of areas identified for study.

Sixty Year 10 students were interviewed about the curriculum and its relevance, the appropriateness of teaching practices used at Year 10, school organizational processes and policies and their involvement in school governance. In addition most Year 10 students at both schools participated in studies concerning the quality of secondary school life, the problems and concerns facing teenagers today, the organization of Year 10 education, the nature of teaching and learning and the outcomes of high school education. As well about 90 of these students participated in a study investigating the amount and type of homework done by high school students, an issue which had been raised by several educators within the sytem. Year 9 students were only slightly less involved in the pilot studies than either the students of Years 7 or 10. The major issues addressed wit.. these students concerned parental involvement in learning, the classroom learning environment and the characteristics of the curriculum. Year 9 students were also involved in an extensive study of factors influencing the amount and type of homework done. This latter study also investigated the types of experiences high school students have outside normal school time: their involvement in part-time jobs, duties and responsibilities they possess in the home, their recreational activities and the amount of television watched. Year 8 students were involved to a lesser extent than the other students. The main area in which their views were sought related to the subjects they were studying and how these were taught.

In brief, a rigorous program of preliminary research addressing a large number of student-focused matters was undertaken. Co-operation of large groups of students was sought and gained. The students identified matters which were of direct concern to them and which they felt should be addressed by the High School Review Committee. Among the more senior students there was strong agreement that the high school curriculum needs review, both in terms of the range of courses offered and the relevance of those courses to the world beyond high school. Year 10 students were particularly future-oriented and saw the relevance of courses often in terms of their relation to increasing their job opportunities. Senior students also felt that the relationship between teachers and senior students within high schools required close examination. They believed that teachers should give Year 10 students greater responsibility for their own learning and treat them in a more adult manner. As a result discipline procedures and the overall atmosphere in schools seemed to be an area of concern in which students believed changes were needed. Senior students saw themselves as being able to play a greater role in the governance of the school - in setting rules of behaviour, in developing appropriate curriculum structures and in organizing the learning environment. Finally while most students were satisfied about assessment in general there were specific concerns common to a number of students. These related to continuous assessment, grading procedures across different ability levels and reporting procedures.

The pilot studies also suggested that the issue of student transition from primary school to secondary school was not a major concern. Students at both schools indicated that very few problems arose during this time and that, by the end of about the tenth week when the pilot study was undertaken, most students had settled well into high schooling. By contrast the changing views of high schooling as students progressed from Year 7 to Year 10 were quite marked. The pilot studies indicated that students' attitudes towards a wide variety of aspects of high school deteriorated considerably between Year 7 and Year 10. The point at which that deterioration occurred was not clear, although Year 9 students' views about high school differed little from those of the Year 10 students. While some may consider this change to be a function purely of adolescence, it is an issue which needed close attention by the High School Review Committee.

The concerns of students did not vary markedly across the two schools involved in the pilot studies. Students in one school said much the same as students in the other school. By contrast there appeared considerable variation within schools. Students within a school differed quite considerably in the views they held about many of the aspects of high school education we investigated. This itself drew attention to a further issue which needed attention by the High School Review. How can high schools provide a variety of educational experiences likely to meet the differing demands of students with different educational goals in mind? From a research perspective this emphasized the need to investigate the influence of particular student characteristics such as educational and vocational aspirations upon their views of contemporary high school education.

The Teacher-Focused Pilot Studies

Teachers from both pilot schools participated in studies which were quite broad ranging, addressing issues which were specific to the department, the school or the system in which they worked. The studies investigated the following:

* teacher satisfaction with the job;

* staff development needs of classroom teachers and senior staff;

* teachers' views of the problems and concerns of adolescents;

* teachers' views of the most helpful and least helpful characteristics of their school and the system as a whole;

* teachers' perceptions of the organizational needs of their departments (or faculties) and the school as a whole;

* teachers' views on liaison between primary schools and high schools and between high schools and secondary colleges.

The studies utilized a variety of information-gathering methods: open-ended questionnaires, interviews, group discussions, structured questionnaires and staff meetings. In this way the studies elicited teachers' views on both particular aspects of high school education which we specified and other educational aspects which were especially important to them. The studies themselves were derived in part from previous research done elsewhere. For example previous research of Martin and Meade's dealing with teachers' views of Sydney high schools (Meade, 1981), a study of teacher satisfaction among Victorian teachers (Fordham, 1981) and an evaluation of staff and organizational needs of Australian technical and further education (Fordham and Ainley, 1980) all served as a basis for the development of appropriate data gathering instruments and the collection of comparative information.

All staff from both schools participated in these studies. This meant that 110 teachers were involved. The studies served to both highlight the major strengths of the system as perceived by teachers and identify areas of specific concern. In this way guidance could be given to the Review Committee about the strengths of the system upon which future developments could be founded. For example the most helpful characteristics of the system perceived by the teachers in the pilot studies included school-based curriculum development, the size of the system and overall teaching conditions. These were perceived strengths of the system, strengths upon which proposed changes to alleviate areas of concern could be developed.

There was a considerable number of issues which the more formal surveys and the less formal staff meetings both suggested warranted attention by the High School Review. There was a general concern about student motivation, discipline and general student welfare. This concern was complemented by teachers' apparent need for further development in interpersonal skills, skills which would assist them in relating to their students. Teachers also perceived a lack of parental interest in their children's learning and education, and a general lack of discipline in the home. Lack of parental support, teachers indicated, resulted in reduced student interest and self-discipline. This raised for the Review Committee the issue of parental involvement in ACT high school education, an involvement which is supposedly fundamental to the operation of the system. Related to lack of student interest was a concern by some teachers in the pilot studies as to how one can make curricula more meaningful to students. The relevance of the curriculum to adult life and the world we now live in was a third issue raised by teachers. This was accompanied by teachers indicating that their major staff development needs included a need to know more about the relevance of what they teach to the world of work and a need for increased time and assistance in curriculum development and evaluation. A fourth issue raised by staff was their beliefs about the value placed on education by the community. Teachers felt that the general community viewed education negatively and teachers as a profession quite poorly. The low self-image of teachers became evident in the pilot studies and together with low

teacher morale was raised by teachers as an important issue for further consideration during the review; associated with low teacher morale was a concern about reduced opportunities for promotion and career development. Finally effective communication within and between schools appeared an important issue in the minds of the teachers. Within the school, teachers indicated that communication within departments and between departments required improvement, particularly in regard to curriculum liaison. In both pilot schools several groups of staff were involved as part of the research program in meeting teachers from the local secondary colleges. These teachers acknowledged the need for greater liaison between high schools and secondary colleges and wished the Review Committee to consider how such liaison could best be facilitated. The pilot studies did not indicate increased liaison between high schools and primary schools to be a major need of the system.

In brief the teacher-focused pilot studies indentified a set of issues which warranted furter attention during the High School Review. These included teacher-student relationships, student motivation and discipline, parental support and involvement, teacher self-image and teacher morale, the relevance of curricula and the level of communication within and between schools in the system.

The Pilot Studies - A Summary

Prior to the commencement of the High School Review a series of pilot studies was undertaken. These pilot studies provided valuable insight into the major educational issues which were of concern to students and teachers and which, they believed, should be addressed in any review of ACT high school education. These issues concerned a wide range of aspects of secondary education. Some issues were school specific; others concerned groups of schools or the system as a whole. However a feature of the overall set of issues was that many concerned both students and teachers and demonstrated the interdependence of each in learning.

The pilot studies also provided the opportunity to develop appropriate methods for investigating further the issues which were identified in this phase of the research program.

The Major Research Program

The preliminary research in two ACT high schools during the first half of 1982 identified a wide range of important issues for further investigation and these have already been noted. Following discussions between the High School Review Committee and the Evaluation and Research Section of the Schools Office the overall set of issues was reduced to those thought to be of most importance for the review. These issues were the following:

* parent involvement in ACT education;

* the nature of high school students today and the social problems they face;

* high school experiences and the outcomes of high school education;

* assessment practices in high schools;

* changing the high school curriculum and constraints upon change;

* core curriculum as it applies to a range of school types in the ACT;

* teacher satisfaction and job morale;

* staff development needs and organizational needs of high schools;

* the role of the high school principal in the ACT Schools Authority;

* profiles of school board membership.

The last two of these issues addressed in the research program were initiated at the request of the High School Review Committee. The composition of school boards, with particular reference to the congruence of the educational and social characteristics of board members with those of the general school population, was an issue that was of interest to the Committee. The Committee also viewed as important gaining greater knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of principals within the system.

The Committee also requested a study of parents' views on secondary schooling. It was intended that this study would provide parents with the opportunity to present their views about what constitutes good secondary schooling and what are the signs of poor secondary schooling. Two other research areas were suggested by the Evaluation and Research Section as warranting further investigation but, following discussion with the Review Committee, it was decided that there were insufficient resources available. These areas were:

* a system-level analysis of policies and structures. The governance of high school education with particular attention to policy-formulation and policy-implementation at the school and Schools Office interface;

* a school-level analysis of staffing and resource distribution, to complement the Australian Education Council's staffing and resources study. At a later date the Review Committee requested a study of teacher resource allocation in high schools.

Overall 12 different research areas or issues were identified for further investigation. The purpose of further investigating these issues was to provide another source of evidence upon which the Committee could deliberate and base its recommendations at the conclusion of the Review. The research program designed to meet the demands of the High School Review Committee comprised critical papers, presentations to the Committee and research studies. Four issues were addressed in terms of critical papers and presentations to the Committee. The remaining eight issues were addressed by means of more formal research studies. In the main the formal research studies were undertaken wholly by the Evaluation and Research Section of the Schools Office. However several studies were undertaken by the Evaluation and Research Section in co-operation with either another Section of the Schools Office or other researchers within the ACT research community.

The Critical Papers

Core curriculum as it applies to a range of types of schools in the ACT. David Francis and Beth Moran, Curriculum Development Centre.

The major purpose of the paper was to investigate the extent to which the Curriculum Development Centre's work on core curriculum can guide the development of curricula in ACT high schools. The paper examined the application of the concept of a core curriculum to three types of high schools, differing in organizational structure and educational orientation. The critical paper was completed by Mr David Francis and Mrs Beth Moran of the Curriculum Development Centre. Limited copies are available from the Evaluation and Research Section of the ACT Schools Authority.

The Parent Role in a Participative System of Schooling. Cath Blakers, Australian National University.

The major purpose of the paper was to examine the operation of parental involvement in ACT high schools. The paper dealt in general terms with the formal and informal avenues of parent participation and involvement and identified areas in which there are particular constraints which deserve further attention.

The paper was prepared by Ms. Cath Blakers of the Sociology Department, Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University. It will be published in the second volume of this Report (ACT Schools Authority 1983).

Presentations to Review Committee

1. The Nature of High School Students. Don Lawrence, Psychiatrist, Canberra

Dr. Don Lawrence is a practising psychiatrist whose work brings him into contact with many adolescents in the ACT. His presentation dealt with adolescent high school students as he sees them including the problems they face, the family and social contexts in which they live and the implications of his knowledge of high school students for high schools. Limited copies of an edited transcript of this talk are available from the Evaluation and Research Section of the ACT Schools Authority.

2. Assessment of Student Performance in High Schools. Bernard Rechter, Director, Lincoln Institute of Health Sciences, Victoria.

Mr. Rechter addressed the issue of the role of assessment in high school education. In his presentation the purposes of assessment were discussed, particularly those of diagnosis of learning difficulties and evaluation of student achievement. Certification as it might apply to student performance in Year 10 was commented upon. Limited copies of an edited transcript of his talk are available from the Evaluation and Research Section of the ACT Schools Authority.

Research Studies

1. Study of the Changing Curriculum and Constraints on Change

The purpose of this study was to identify the major curriculum issues in high schools for the next few years, and to detail the responses which schools are making and are likely to make to these. In particular, attention was paid to perceptions of constraints which limit or are likely to limit the responses which high schools considered to these issues, and factors which facilitate appropriate responses.

At the system level a sample of 53 Assistant Principals and teachers who attended the 1982 Curriculum Renewal seminars as well as curriculum consultants were surveyed in order to identify the major curriculum issues facing high schools, and factors which influence the responsiveness of schools to these issues. Those surveyed included representatives of primary schools, high schools and secondary colleges.

The data gathering for the system-level analysis of curriculum change occurred in two distinct stages. Firstly, the sample was asked to clarify, extend or redefine a set of curriculum issues which previous research (Batten, in progress) and the pilot studies had identified as being important issues in ACT high school education. Secondly, at a later date, the sample was asked to (i) rate the issues according to how important or of how much concern they were, (ii) indicate issues in which their school or schools were responding adequately, (iii) indicate areas in which their school or schools were responding inadequately and (iv)

identify the factors which constrained or facilitated schools' responses to the set of issues. In this manner detailed analyses of curriculum change in the high school system were received from a group of educators who were either responsible for or interested in curriculum change in the system. The report of this study will appear in a subsequent volume of this Report.

Concurrent with the system level survey of curriculum change, case studies of three schools were conducted to examine the relationship between the structures and processes of curriculum decision-making and the types of response those schools are able to make to curriculum issues as they arise. The three schools were selected so as to represent differing curriculum structures.

Each school was asked to nominate those areas of curriculum change which had recently occurred or were currently occurring in their school. Some areas nominated dealt with the curriculum as it affected the whole school, other areas nominated concerned only elements of the total school curriculum and/or affected only sub-groups of students within the school. Areas of curriculum change investigated included the overall structure of the elective system, pastoral care and career education. The researchers spent at least one week in each school interviewing staff about the curriculum changes. These interviews focused attention upon: (i) identification of need and clarification of curriculum problems, (ii) development of possible solutions, (iii) constraints and support, (iv) decision-making structures, (v) influence of available resources (vi) implementation, (vii) outcomes. In each school approximately 20 staff were interviewed; and findings were then forwarded to each school for discussion. A synthesis of the issues arising from the case studies on curriculum change will be published in a later volume of this Report.

2. Study of Assessment Practices in ACT High Schools

The major purpose of the study was to document the range of assessment and reporting practices used in a sample of high schools. Of interest were the purposes, methods, amount and timing of assessment and reporting as well as the nature of what is assessed and reported and its relationship to the curriculum. Student, teacher and parent views about these practices were sought.

A sample of three high schools was selected for the study and assessment practices in four subject areas studied: English, Mathematics and two elective subjects. Schools were asked to nominate two areas which might provide a range of assessement procedures. In total two Social Science, two Science, an Art and Industrial Arts faculty were selected, in addition to the three English and Mathematics faculties. Interviews were conducted with the Assistant Principal responsible for assessment in the school, appropriate subject co-ordinators, teachers and students in Years 8 and 10. Parents' views were obtained by interviewing parents at parent-teacher nights. The researchers spent in total about one week in each of the three schools in the study.

The findings of the study will be published in a later volume of this Report.

3. Study of High School Experiences and Outcomes

The aim of this study was to identify the views of high schools held by those young people who have been, or currently are, most closely associated with them. Particular attention in the study was paid to their views about:

(i) the extent to which the outcomes of their high school experience have prepared them for life, in terms of both their immediate life and their future adult life;

(ii) the extent to which the outcomes of their high school experience have prepared them for their current job and their continuing involvement in education;

(iii) the extent to which the high school curriculum and organization have met their particular needs and interests;

(iv) the characteristics of high school teachers and their teaching practices which they found most and least satisfying.

(v) possible changes to high school education which might make the educational outcomes of high schools more closely aligned to what they consider to be important.

The study investigated the perceptions of five groups of young people. These were:

(i) Year 10 students who were, at the time of the study, currently enrolled in government high schools. This group included students likely to leave secondary college early in Year 11, as well as those not intending to continue their education beyond high school. In total, 1545 Year 10 students enrolled in ten high schools participated in this aspect of the study. Information was collected by means of a survey;

(ii) Year 11 students who were currently enrolled in a government secondary college. The rationale for seeking the views of Year 11 students was to see whether, having experienced nearly one year in a secondary college, their views about high schools were different from those of students in Year 10. The views of 386 Year 11 students who had previously attended government high schools were analysed: the students were drawn from seven colleges and ex-students from all government high schools were represented in this sample. Information was collected by means of a survey;

(iii) TAFE students who had attended a government high school during 1980-82. In total, 50 students were interviewed who were studying TAFE courses. Thirty-seven students were studying TAFE courses, either full-time or as part of an apprenticeship. The remaining 13 students were studying either in the EPUY program (Educational Programme for Unemployed Youth) or in transition courses. Both of these latter courses are for students who have been unemployed for at least four months;

(iv) Young people who were currently unemployed and who attended high schools during 1980-82. Twenty-three young people were interviewed about their high school experiences and their views on the outcomes of high school.

(v) Young people who were currently employed and who attended high schools during 1980-82. Twenty-three ex-students were traced and interviewed. The study was designed so that comparisons between the views of each of these target groups could be made and that, where possible, comparisons could be made with relevant previous ACT research studies or studies done elsewhere. For this reason the questionnaires designed for seeking information from Year 10 and Year 11 students were derived in large part from Meade (1981), Anderson et al. (1980) and Williams et al. (1981).

The findings of this study are to be published in the third volume of this Report. The volume presents detailed analysis of the educational and occupational aspirations of students and the views of students and ex-students on a wide variety of aspects of high school education. These include views on teaching and teaching methods, curriculum relevance and choice, assessment practices and the purposes and outcomes of high school education.

4. Study of Teacher Satisfaction and Teachers' Views of High School Education

The study of teacher satisfaction and teachers' views of high school education was designed to provide several outcomes. The first of these was to determine teachers' level of satisfaction about a broad range of quite specific facets of their job. These facets included the following: involvement in school decision-making, relationships with students, the provision of study leave, the priority given to education by the government, teacher career prospects and parent involvement in learning. The second was to provide teachers with the opportunity to indicate in a general way what they believed to be the most helpful and least helpful characteristics of the school they taught in and the system as a whole. The third aim was to determine what teachers believed to be the major problems that face their students.

Two surveys were undertaken to meet the aims of the study. Firstly, the staff of eleven high schools were asked to complete a teacher satisfaction survey at a regular staff meeting. This survey listed 62 facets of a teacher's job and asked teachers to indicate their level of satisfaction with each. In addition, they were asked to indicate the policy-formulating structures within their school concerning a range of educational matters such as general curriculum objectives, homework policy and allocation of teachers to classes. A total of 452 staff completed the questionnaire.

The second survey was completed by staff during the week preceding the regular staff meeting at which the teacher satisfaction survey was completed. This was an open-ended questionnaire with six questions covering teachers' views about their students, the schools in which they teach, and the ACT educational system as a whole. In total, 414 staff completed this questionnaire.

The design of the study enabled findings to be compared with two previous research studies. The teacher satisfaction questionnaire was a slightly modified version of one used previously in studying teacher satisfaction among Victorian high school and primary school teachers (Fordham, 1981) as well as in Canada (Holdaway, 1978). In addition, the Evaluation and Research Section is co-operating in a study of teacher satisfaction among ACT primary school teachers using a similar questionnaire. The open-ended questionnaire was derived from Meade (1981) and provides comparative information with that of Sydney teachers.

The findings from this study are to be reported in the fifth volume of this Report.

5. Study of Staff Development and Organizational Development Needs

The study surveyed the factors which influence staff attendance at staff development activities and identified those staff development needs which were of most importance to the individual teacher and the system as a whole. Staff development needs were defined in terms of fairly broad aspects of teaching rather than specific teaching competencies. For example, knowledge of recent developments in the teacher's area of specialization, skills in teaching children with special talents, and inter-personal skills were aspects of teaching about which teachers were asked to indicate the extent of their staff development needs. In addition, the study also sought to identify those aspects of school organization and functioning which teachers believe require further development.

Organizational needs were defined quite generally and included such aspects of school organization and functioning as continual appraisal of the goals of the school, clear communication between school departments and involvement of students in the corporate affairs of the school.

This study was carried out at the same time as the survey of teachers' views about high schools and the ACT system as a whole. The data gathering instrument used was a structured questionnaire which listed 25 aspects of teaching and 13 aspects of school functioning and asked teachers to:

(i) indicate how important each was to either their own teaching or, in the case of the latter, to the overall functioning of the school;

(ii) indicate the extent to which each required further development.

In total, 379 Band 1 and Band 2 teachers from 11 schools completed this questionnaire. An additional 35 Band 3 and Band 4 staff completed a questionnaire which replaced the 25 aspects of teaching with 13 aspects of management and administration. In total, therefore, 414 staff participated in this study.

The study was also replicated in a sample of government primary schools and this provided useful comparative information, especially with regard to the important organizational needs of each sector. This study was conducted in co-operation with the Professional Development Section of the ACT Schools Authority.

The study is reported in the fifth volume of this Report.

6. Profile of School Board Membership

The purpose of this study was to construct a profile of the membership of school boards in the ACT, particularly those of high schools. All high school board members were surveyed, as were college board members and members of a sample of 20 primary school boards. The survey sought information about various characteristics of the members such as sex, education level, occupation or teaching area. It also sought information about aspects of their board membership such as the necessity of an election, when they were selected as a board member, the length of membership on the board, membership of various sub-committees, and in the case of parents, other involvement in the school. A total of 132 members of high school boards, 117 members of primary school boards and 55 members of secondary college boards completed the questionnaire.

The findings of this study are available from the Evaluation and Research Section of the ACT Schools Authority.

7. The Role of the Principal in ACT High Schools

The principal of a high school in the ACT fills many different roles. He or she has to be, among other things: the educational leader of the school's staff; the executive officer of the school board; a senior manager of the ACT educational system as a whole.

The study examined the role of the principal as educational leader, executive officer and senior manager as the role related to student achievement and personal development and teacher competence and professional development. Five principals, representing a wide range of administrative styles, were interviewed about their roles in each of these two areas. The interviews utilized a common set of questions to ensure the collection of comparative information.

The findings of this study are integrated with the research reported in volumes three and five of this Report.

8. Resource Allocation in ACT High Schools

The purpose of this study was to examine the distribution of human teaching resources within a group of ACT high schools with particular statistical reference to:

- The time spent by students in particular subjects
- The proportion of the student population studying in particular subject areas in each school
- The proportion of the total teaching time available in each school allocated to each subject area
- The average class size in subjects
- The teacher time available to students in particular subjects for each hour of timetabled study.

A sample of five high schools, representing a range of organizational pattern, participated in the study. Basic statistical information relating to class sizes, number of periods taught, teaching arrangements and number of students studying each subject, was collected from each. In addition, Assistant Principals (Staffing) were interviewed concerning factors influencing class sizes, the distribution of teachers and the allocation of classes to teachers.

Overall the study gave a general view of how human teaching resources are distributed in ACT high schools.

The study was undertaken jointly by Mr Brian Lees of Wanniassa High School and staff of the Evaluation and Research section. The findings of this study will be reported in the sixth volume of this Report.

9. Parents' Views on Secondary Schooling in the ACT

The purpose of this study was to identify the views of sixth-grade parents about secondary schooling in the ACT. The study had three aims:

1. To understand better what parents are seeking from secondary schooling;
2. To understand better the secondary school 'choice' process;

3. To explore how well families are informed about secondary schooling and the sources of information available to them.

A sample of 226 parents of sixth-graders from 14 government primary schools were surveyed by means of an open-ended questionnaire and interview. The survey was undertaken in November 1982 at a time when parents were deciding upon the most appropriate type of secondary school for their sixth-grade child. They were asked to comment upon what makes for a good secondary school, the signs of a poor high school, their major considerations in choosing a secondary school for their child, and whether the school of their choice was available to them. The influence of parent and child characteristics upon parents' views on secondary schooling was also investigated in the study. The study was a co-operative venture between the Evaluation and Research Section and Dr. C. Collins of the Canberra College of Advanced Education.

The findings of the study will be published in the fourth volume of this Report.

Research Program - Summary

Twelve broad issues were addressed in the research program for the High School Review. These issues related to both the operation of the system as a whole as well as individual schools in particular. A variety of strategies was used in gathering information about each. Two critical papers and two oral presentations were prepared. In addition, nine formal research studies were undertaken, all in the third school term of 1982. The research studies included both case-studies and system-wide surveys and sought information by means of questionnaire completion and interviews. Information was gathered from parents, students, ex-students and teachers and all high schools were actively involved in the research program.

The extent of co-operation sought and gained from all high schools in the system should be emphasized. The research program demanded a lot of ACT government high schools - it asked them to undergo a degree of research scrutiny that no other Australian educational system has requested of its high schools. At no stage in the research did any school refuse to participate in any study, whether those studies were relatively quick surveys or more detailed and exhausting case-studies. The researchers pay tribute to the openness of all high schools in the system.

Dissemination of Research Findings

Three audiences were clearly identified for the High School Review Research Program. These were the High School Review Committee, the officers working within the Schools Office and the staff in the high schools. As well, there were several other audiences including the wider community and the educational research community.

At the conclusion of the pilot studies, reports were prepared and presented to the two schools concerned for comment. The reports were then distributed to the Review Committee during its early meetings. In this way the first objective of the research program, viz. to identify a range of issues which warranted further attention or investigation, was met. At the same time, it was emphasized to the Committee that the generalizability of the findings to the system as a whole was limited. The reports were also distributed to all high school principals. This was seen as useful means of raising the level of awareness among principals of some of the issues likely to be attended to by the High School Review and the research program in particular. The dissemination of the pilot study reports was undertaken only following agreement of the two pilot schools concerned.

The findings of the main research program were treated in the following manner. In the case of all surveys, immediately after the results had been analysed a preliminary report was produced. This report included a brief description of the methodology, a summary of the findings and an item by item listing of all results arising from the survey. Seven such reports were produced at the beginning of 1983 and given immediately on completion to the Review Committee. The Committee was given full opportunity to discuss the results of these reports with the researchers - often they did. The Chief Education Officer, Assistant Chief Education Officer and the Directors of each branch were also circulated with a copy of each report. The reason for this was to provide the senior management of the Schools Authority with time to reflect upon the type of research program being undertaken, examine the trends which were appearing in the findings, and be better prepared to comment upon the implications of the findings once they became available. The preliminary reports were also circulated to all high school principals for their consideration. In addition each school received its own results from whichever set of surveys they were involved. This meant that they could examine both the system-wide results and their own results.

The case-studies were treated quite differently. For example, in the curriculum change study each case-study school was circulated a report about its own school prior to it being presented to the Review Committee. The school was then given the opportunity to correct any inaccuracies or append any further comments it so wished. Once this was done, both the individual case-study reports and a synthesis of them was presented to the Review Committee. Individual school reports were not disseminated to senior management either in other schools or in the Schools Office. The assessment study was also handled differently. Preliminary reports were returned to each faculty for their scrutiny, and following feedback from them the final draft of the report, which synthesized many of the issues arising from each school, was returned to each school for further comment. Only then was this report disseminated to the Review Committee.

Following publication of the High School Review Report by the Committee the following research will be made available five volumes:

Volume 2 - BLAKERS, C. If wishes were Horses .... The Parent Role in a Participative System of Schooling. One of three papers included in volume 2 of the Report.

Volume 3 - Year 10 Students' and Recent High School Leavers' Views of ACT High Schooling

Volume 4 - Facing the Secondary School Years: Year Six Parents' Thoughts and Choices

Volume 5 - Teachers' views of ACT High School Education

Volume 6 - Curriculum and Assessment Issues in ACT High School Education

In Conclusion

Towards the end of 1981 the ACT Schools Authority agreed that there was to be a review of high schools. Immediately after that decision the Evaluation and Research Section prepared a research program to complement the review process. That program was agreed to by the Schools Authority. An important feature of the program was that it would commence prior to the establishment of the Review Committee. In this way, the research program could provide information to the Committee immediately it started its work. The research program comprised two distinct stages. The first stage was designed to identify issues which warranted more detailed investigation; an additional purpose was to develop appppropriate methods whereby such further investigation could be done quickly and effectively. The second stage comprised a more detailed analysis of a set of issues identified in the previous phase and considered important by the Review Committee; in addition there were several issues suggested by the Review Committee which were of particular interest to them. Findings of these studies were progressively given to the Review Committee for their consideration.

The effectiveness of the research program will be dependent upon its acceptance by its three major audiences. The Review Committee itself had access to preliminary reports of the research and incorporated those findings into its thinking, along with the many submissions it received, discussions it conducted and visits its members made to schools. Some members of the Schools Office, such as the Staff Development Section, are already using the findings which relate to their work. The staff of several schools are also beginning to use the findings for their own evaluative purposes and for future development. The research findings provide a fairly comprehensive information base for all these audiences, and point towards areas where further investigations and further development might be directed for the improvement of ACT high schools.

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